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History of Hardee County

Jean Plowden

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HISTORY OF HARDEE COUNTY

BY
JEAN PLOWDEN



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WAUCHULA, FLORIDA

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By
JEAN PLOWDEN

INTRODUCTION

In presenting this brief history to the public we do so with the one thought of having tried to render a service to the county and its citizens, the pioneers, those who reside here now, and those who may live here in the future.

In the first place, it was a difficult undertaking. Only the most meager records were to be found anywhere, at any cost of time and effort. It has required many, many hours of constant search and untiring effort to collect what information is here given. Many trips had to be made to various parts of this and adjoining counties in search of facts; scores of letters were written, numerous personal calls made, and a tremendous amount of time and effort expended in digging up information about the past.

Because of the fact that there was no written record of the county itself and few records of early development, we had the task of finding out what facts we could regarding the early history of this section. In this we have been splendidly assisted by many old settlers, others who came to the county only recently, and by those outside the county who happened to know some of the history. We have secured a large part of the information here given from newspaper files, which were found to be more useful than individuals because of dates and other details which time erases from memory. These files furnished a valuable source with which to check stories given us from memory.

Government maps in possession of the county engineer were another source of accurate information, as were war department records regarding old forts in the county. The state supreme court library furnished us a copy of the treaty signed with the Indians in 1839. Peace river got its name from this treaty.

We trust that in reading this little volume you will bear in mind the task of preparing it and not be too generous with your criticism. There are faults, we admit, but our best efforts have gone into preparing it. We kept constantly in mind the idea of accuracy rather than legend, fact rather than fiction.

We trust that it may be widely read, especially in our schools, for we have found that our school children know very little if anything about the county in which they live. The information herein contained

INTRODUCTION

should serve to give them some idea of the struggles the pioneer settlers had and provide accurate knowledge of the county's growth and development from the earliest days to the present.

It is our sincerest hope that this history may prove interesting to you and may be instructive and inspiring both to those now living within the county and those who in the future may make it their home.

JEAN PLOWDEN.

Wauchula, Florida.

October 15, 1929.

CHAPTER I

FLORIDA, while one of the oldest state's in the Union, is still one of the youngest. Known as America's last frontier, it has more recently become America's playground. While it is one of the oldest states in point of years since it was founded, it has been only recently that Florida's opportunities have become known to the rest of the world.

A hundred years ago, before steam locomotives pulled railroad cars over the nation, before steamboats puffed along up the Hudson and Mississippi rivers, before automobiles were dreamed of or the telephone had come, the Indians camped along the banks of Hardee county's streams and built their tepees in the fertile valleys where now citrus groves and vegetable patches flourish.

They doubtless lived their slow and easy-going lives in their characteristic manner, trapping and fishing, eating, sleeping, then passing on to the "happy hunting grounds" to be succeeded by other generations that followed the same course of events.

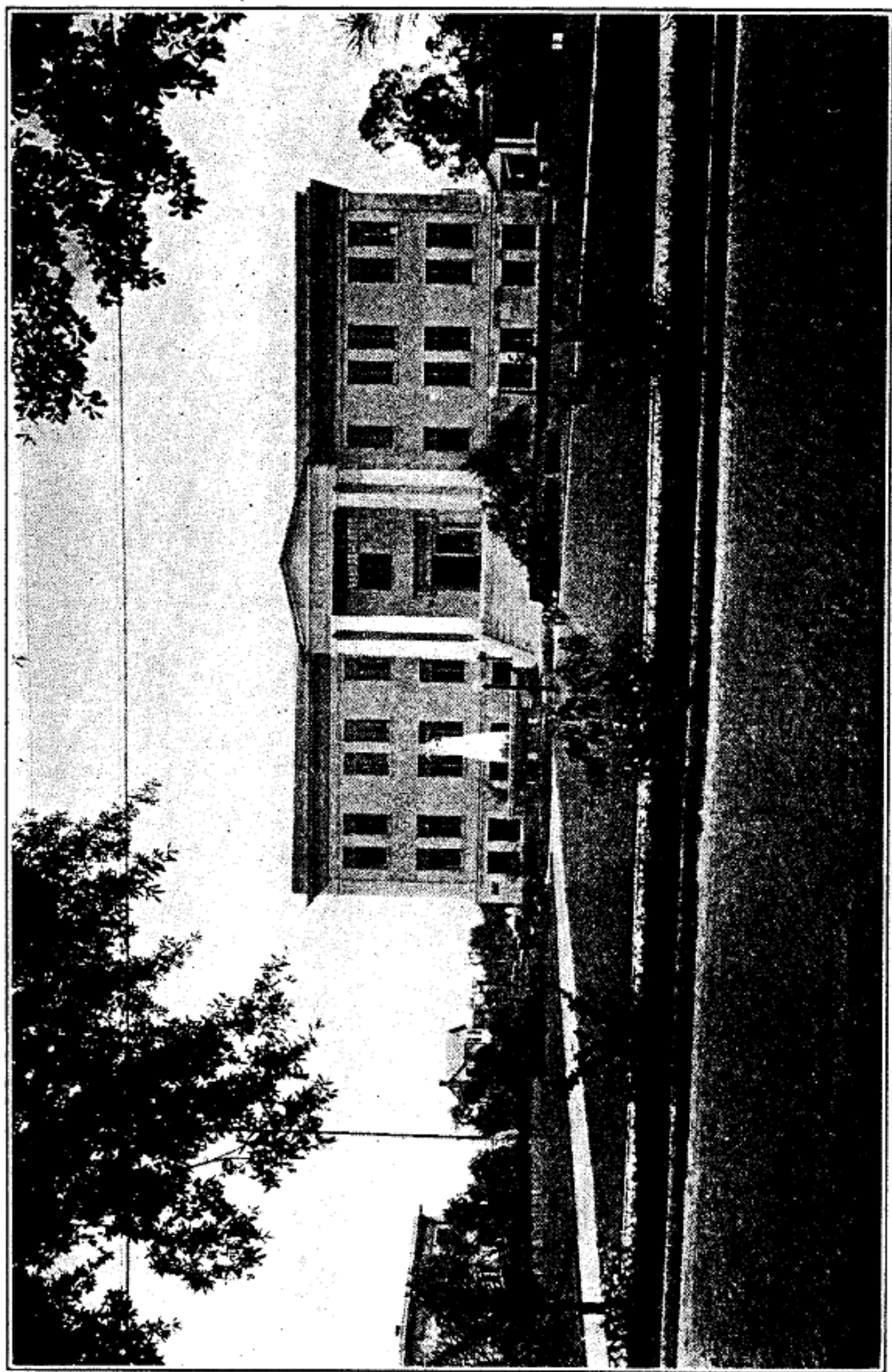
Indian names abound in all Florida, and daily we hear such names as Tallahassee, Withlacoochee, Caloosahatchee, Kissimmee, and many others.

Almost everyone is familiar with the history of Florida, so only a brief review of that will be given here.

The area now known as the state of Florida reaches from the Perdido river on the west to the Atlantic ocean on the east, and from the southern boundaries of Alabama and Georgia on the north to the Florida Straits and Gulf of Mexico on the south. Florida stretches about 450 miles north and south and contains approximately 58,000 square miles. It attains its highest altitude in the Ridge section and in the hills of West Florida, being about 300 feet above sea level in those sections.

Florida has thousands of fresh water lakes ranging in size from an acre or more to Lake Okeechobee, which covers more than a thousand square miles. Many of these lakes have no visible outlet, yet the water in them is clear and fresh and they are characterized by sand bottoms and afford excellent boating, bathing and fishing.

The state has good drainage which is afforded by the rivers which empty into the Atlantic ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Okeechobee. Lake Okeechobee, which is situated in the northern part of the Everglades, is connected with the ocean by canals, which help to keep the water from overflowing the low banks in normal times. The Everglades is a vast, marshy region which nearly covers the lower part of the Florida peninsular.



HARDEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE AT WAUCHULA

Recently, much of this land has been reclaimed and put into cultivation, the principal crops being sugar cane, beans and other early vegetables. Much of the Everglades region is covered with a growth of sawgrass and flags. This region affords excellent hunting grounds and sportsmen flock to it every winter in quest of deer, turkeys, and other wild game.

Originally the state of Florida extended west to the Mississippi river and north for an indefinite distance. The Spaniards called all the territory Florida, after it was discovered by Ponce De Leon, who landed near Saint Augustine on Easter Sunday, March 27, 1513.

Florida was transferred to England 1783 was transferred to Spain.

On February 22, 1819, the state was purchased from Spain by the United States for the sum of five million dollars, and three years later, on March 3, 1822, civil government was established in Florida. The first session of the legislative council was held at Pensacola in the same year.

The site of Tallahassee was selected as the state capital in 1823 and the following year, on December 21st, was held the first meeting of the council.

Florida was originally divided into two counties: Escambia and St. Johns, or East and West Florida. Hardee county lay in what was called East Florida, this territory including approximately all that is now known as Florida.

Dade county was formed on February 4, 1836, and on January 9, 1855, this section became Manatee county. The county seat was established at Pine Level. It remained here until on May 19, 1887, DeSoto county was formed from part of Manatee. The

county seat of Manatee was removed to Braidenton (now Bradenton) and the county seat of DeSoto was put at Arcadia. Hardee county was formed on April 23, 1921, and the county seat established at Wauchula.

There was considerable restlessness and anxiety among the Indians prior to that time, but the Seminole Indian war did not actually begin until about October, 1835. Three years before this, in 1832, there had been a treaty made with a number of chiefs by which it was agreed that certain of the chiefs would go to examine the western lands and if they were satisfied, would return and all the Indians would remove there. The chiefs said they were satisfied, but when they returned to their people, they found the Indians unwilling to go. The Seminoles were runaways from the Creeks and were not willing to go to the western reservations where they would be forced to live among the Creeks. Another reason they gave was that the climate was colder and they would be unable to get lightwood there. They did not wish to remove to a colder climate. Even the chiefs, who had said they were satisfied to be moved to the western lands, did not advise their people to go.

A number of those whose names brighten the pages of American history were sent to subdue the Seminoles in Florida. Among them, General Winfield Scott, General Zachary Taylor, General Macomb, and others.

General Taylor was in command of the Indians in 1837 and in December of that year he was ordered to find the Indians wherever he could. He met a large force of Seminoles in a dense swamp near Okeechobee and had a hard three hours' fight with

them, after which the Seminoles were driven from the field. This was the last real battle with the Seminoles.

General Macomb agreed that the Indians should be allowed to remain below Peace river and Lake Okeechobee, and the war was declared ended. However, the war did not end then, and there was some trouble with the Indians as late as 1855.

General Taylor asked to be relieved of command in Florida and General Armistead took command. He captured 450 Indians during the year he was in charge, then asked to be relieved. General Worth took charge.

General Worth and his men succeeded in deporting several hundred Indians to Arkansas, and in 1842 General Worth reported to the government that only about three hundred Indians remained in the territory of Florida. He advised that these should be allowed to live below Peace river.

After the end of the Indian war, many people came to live in Florida. People began to think this should be a state, where a governor and other officials should be elected; they wanted to have part in electing a president, and to enjoy many other privileges a territory did not have.

The state was admitted into the Union in 1845, President Tyler signing the bill on March 3rd of that year.

Few people came to this section of Florida in the early days following the Indian war. They perhaps did not know of the fertile soil here, nor of the abundance of game and fish. Most of the settlers who came to Florida in those days decided to stop and make their homes much farther up the state than where the boundaries of Hardee county extend.

As late as 1850, less than a dozen

families lived in what is now Hardee county, as shown by government maps in the possession of the county surveyor. These maps were made by deputy surveyors of the United States government and have been found to be very accurate as to distances, landmarks, etc. Much valuable information has been secured from them, and on numerous occasions we used the maps in tracing up stories of the early days, and verifying reports that we gathered at random.

The first survey of this section was made in 1843 (two years before Florida became a state) by Henry Washington, a deputy surveyor and a relative of General George Washington, our nation's first president. Henry Washington surveyed the west boundary of what is now Hardee county.

Sam Reid surveyed part of the county in the same year (1843), and from his field notes we get some idea of the appearance of this section at that time.

Under date of November 30, 1843, Sam Reid entered the following notation in his handbook:

"It was impossible to chain correctly, from the nature of the ground; thick, broken hammocks, full of deep ponds, and in the pine woods, high grass, ponds and deep water."

Mr. Reid's daughter-in-law still lives at Parrish, in Manatee county, at the time this is written.

The north and west boundaries of the county were surveyed in 1854 by John Jackson, another deputy surveyor, who laid out the townsite of Tampa, the leading city on the Florida West Coast.

The south boundary of the county was surveyed in 1855 by G. H. Bunker, deputy surveyor, after whom the set-

Legend has it that the Indians at tlement of Bunker-Lansing was named. tacked Mr. Bunker and his party at this spot.

On the old maps are shown many of the Indian mounds and the old forts. The names of several settlers appear thereon, and it is safe to assume that the few names appearing on the maps constituted the entire population by families of Hardee county at that time.

George Tice lived in the Horse Creek section, and maps show a road leading from George Tice's to I. Dees', not far distant.

W. Catheson lived just west of where George B. Winter's place now is, in township 35 south, range 23 east, section 13, which is southeast of the town of Ona.

Two Platt families lived near where the town of Lily now is, about a quarter of a mile north of the present settlement.

The Green and Alderman families lived near where the town of Fort Green Springs now is, Green living just west of the present townsite and

Alderman just northeast of where the Parrish road intersects the C. H. & N. railroad.

A man named Pelham lived in the section now known as College Hill, west of Bowling Green. Underhills also lived in this section, about where the Zazzalli grove now is.

W. Whitten lived about where Ira Rigdon's farm is located, at the spot near where Heard bridge crosses Peace river northeast of Wauchula.

A man named Thompson lived near Peace river, south and west of where the Popash settlement now is. This was the only family living east of Peace river, as shown by these maps.

To these surveyors who braved the hardships of the new country to accurately chart every section of land, we owe much praise. They did their work well, and it is because of their labors that we are able accurately to trace this county from its beginning, there being no written records other than those maps and field notes, except, of course, some data on the forts established in this section by the government, which will be given presently.

CHAPTER II

Just here it may be said that the name Peace River was given to the stream which flows through Hardee county because a treaty was made with the Seminoles that the Indians should have all the land east and south of the river and Lake Okeechobee.

The first record of a name for the stream, so far as we have been able to find, is contained on maps made in 1856 by one William Moseley, a deputy surveyor. Moseley refers to the stream as Peas Creek, though he gives no reason for such a name. The Indians called it "Tallak-Chopko-Hatchie," we learn from Mr. Moseley's field notes. In 1860, when J. D. Galbraith surveyed this section, he referred to the stream as Peas Creek.

The legend that the stream was named Peas Creek because of the wild peas which are supposed to have grown along its course, is erroneous.

General Macomb, who was sent from Washington to take charge of the Indian outbreaks in Florida in 1839, met some of the Indian chiefs and agreed that they should have all the land lying south and east of Peace river and Lake Okeechobee. However, the trouble with the Indians did not end then.

The following interesting record of General Macomb's activities regarding peace with the Seminoles, was furnished us by Honorable James B.

Whitfield, of the state supreme court, Tallahassee, and is from the superior court library. It is taken from Sprague's history, "The Florida War."

"Major-General Macomb, commanding the army of the United States, arrived at Fort King on the 20th of May, 1839. He came empowered by the president of the United States 'to make an arrangement with the Seminoles.' Through a friendly Indian negro, communication was had with Halleck-Tustenuggee and Thlock-lo-Tustenuggee, or Tigertail, who, on the third day, came to the fort with forty-six warriors. Arpeika, or Sam Jones, sent Chitto-Tustenuggee as his representative. He arrived at Fort King accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Harney, Second Dragoons, U. S. A. A great council was convened, and Halleck-Tustenuggee was appointed lawyer or speaker upon the occasion. He expressed his regret that the older chiefs were either dead or gone from the country, which obliged him to talk on so important an occasion. He felt there was a great responsibility in being the organ of so many people. He wished peace and was prepared to enter into terms that did not require him to move to Arkansas. An arrangement was finally made assigning them a portion of land, temporarily, far south, as traced upon the map, within

which they were to assemble their families before the expiration of sixty days. The utmost good feeling and apparent sincerity prevailed. Provisions and clothing were issued, and after indulging in drink for three days, they left, giving the assurance of a prompt discharge of their obligations. General Macomb returned to Washington, when affairs were again in the hands of General Taylor, who had no confidence in these arrangements, but considered them as a prelude to more treachery and bloodshed. General Macomb on the 20th of May issued the following order:

" 'Headquarters of the Army of the U. S., Fort King, Florida, May 18, 1839.

" 'General Orders.

" 'The major-general commanding in chief has the satisfaction of announcing to the army in Florida, to the authorities of the territory, and to the citizens generally, that he has this day terminated the war with the Seminole Indians, by an agreement entered into with Chitto-Tustenugge, principal chief of the Seminoles, and successor to Arpeika, commonly called Sam Jones, brought to this post by Lieutenant-Colonel Harney, Second Dragoons, from the southern part of the peninsula. The terms of the agreement are, that hostilities immediately cease between the parties; that the troops of the United States, and the Seminole and Mickasukie chiefs and warriors now at a distance be made acquainted, as soon as possible, with the fact that peace exists, and that all hostilities are forthwith to cease on both sides; the Seminoles and Mickasukies agreeing to retire into a district of country in Florida, below Pease Creek, the boundaries of which are as follows, viz.: Beginning at the

most southern point of land between Charlotte Harbor and the Sanybel or Coloosahatchee river, opposite to Sanybel Island; thence into Charlotte Harbor, by the southern pass between Pine Island and that point, along the eastern shore of said harbor to Taalk-Chopko or Pease Creek; thence up said river to Hatchee-Thloko, or Big Creek; thence up said creek to its source; thence easterly to the northern point of Lake Istokpoga; thence along the eastern outlet of said lake, called Istokpoga Creek, to the Kissimmee river; thence southerly down the Kissimmee to Lake Okee-Chobee; thence south through said lake to Ec-ahlahatohee or Shark river; thence down said river westwardly to its mouth; thence along the sea shore northwardly to the place of beginning; that sixty days be allowed the Indians north and east of that boundary to remove their families and effects into said district, where they are to remain until further arrangements are made, under the protection of the troops of the United States, who are to see that they are not molested by intruders, citizens or foreigners, and that the said Indians do not pass the limits assigned them, except to visit the posts which will be hereafter indicated to them. All persons are therefore forbidden to enter the district assigned to said Indians, without written permission of some commanding officer of a military post.

" 'ALEXANDER MACOMB,

" 'Major-General Commanding
In Chief.

" 'By Command of the General. ,

" 'EDMUND SCHRIVER,

" 'Captain and A. A. General.'

"In a letter sent on May 22, 1839, to Hon. J. R. Poinsett, Secretary of War, Major-General Macomb said:

"Under existing circumstances, I did not think it necessary to enter into a formal written treaty, such an instrument with Indians having but little binding effect. Nor did I think it politic, at this time, to say anything about their emigration, leaving that subject open to such future arrangements as the government may think proper to make with them. No restriction upon the pleasure of the government in this respect has been imposed, nor has any encouragement been given to the Indians, that they would be permitted permanently to remain in Florida. There is every reason to believe that when the Indians remaining in Florida shall learn the prosperous condition of their brethren in Arkansas, they will, at no distant period, ask to be permitted to join them.'"

Fort Choconicla, Chokonicla, or Chokkonikla, was located on the west side of Peace River. It was about ten miles south of Fort Meade and about forty miles east of the southern end of Tampa Bay. Fort Choconicla was established October 26, 1849, and abandoned July 18, 1850. It was garrisoned April 30, 1850, by the Headquarters and Companies E and M, Fourth U. S. Artillery.

The fort was on top of a high bluff overlooking the river swamp and a good view may be had from the spot where a few years ago the last rotting logs of the fort disappeared. The spot is now covered with pine and oak trees and it is difficult to locate unless one has a map and knows just where to look for it.

Now nothing remains but a few scrubby oaks to shelter the level spot on the hilltop where in 1850 soldiers encamped. Fort Choconicla was just

north of where Payne's creek empties into Peace river, about a mile south of Bowling Green.

Just across Payne's creek from Fort Choconicla, maps show a blockhouse. This was directly south from Fort Choconicla and was near where a road led to the spot where Payne's creek was forded. The last trace of this blockhouse was erased several years ago by forest fires and the few rotting logs which were there were quickly consumed by the flames. The blockhouse was on a high bluff overlooking the river to the east and Payne's creek to the north. It afforded an excellent view of the country to the south and west and from this point one could detect a man approaching for some distance.

In the northwest part of the county, just west of the present town of Fort Green Springs, old Fort Green was located. This was a log fort established by Jim Green, after whom it was named. It was about thirty miles east of the south end of Tampa Bay and five miles west of Peace river, and five or six miles southwest of Fort Choconicla.

Mr. Green had an orange grove there and he built the fort of logs to protect his family and his neighbors, who would rush to it at the first sign of trouble with the Indians. Old settlers in this section recall how they took refuge in the fort when the Indians attacked. The fort was established about 1854 to 1856, and is shown on maps dated 1856.

About nine miles west and south of the present town of Ona, an Indian mound is located. This mound was shown on maps dated as early as 1850 and its identity is lost with the passing of time and no one seems able to

explain why the mound is there or who is responsible for it.

Aside from Forts Choconicla, Green and Hartsuff, together with a list of settlers in the county at that time, maps dated 1843 to 1856 have nothing else to show, except ponds and marshes, as the surveyors related in their field notes. There were no roads or bridges and travel was slow, especially during the rainy season.

The early settlers, of which there were few in this section at the time, had simply to move onto a piece of land, erect a log house, and set about clearing and planting. Corn, potatoes, squash and pumpkins were the main crops. Game was plentiful and it was an easy matter to step out of the house, bag a deer or turkey, and enjoy a fine meal.

CHAPTER III

In order to properly trace events which took place in this section, it is necessary to digress a little.

Following news of the Dade massacre, which occurred on December 28, 1835, the whole country was shocked and several companies of troops were organized when General Clinch, who was in command of the United States troops, issued a call for volunteers.

Then followed the battle of Withlacoochee, after which General Winfield Scott was placed in command.

After the battle in the Big Wahoo swamp, Osceola came to the camp near St. Augustine, under a flag of truce. He was taken prisoner when General Hernandez gave a signal to the troops to close in upon the Indians. Osceola was taken to St. Augustine, then to Fort Moultrie, near Charleston, where he died soon afterward.

Coacoochee and Talmus Hadjo were taken prisoners at the same time as Osceola. They were imprisoned in the old Fort at St. Augustine, from which they made a dramatic and rather remarkable escape.

In December, 1837, General Taylor set out in the direction of Sam Jones' camp, and met a large force of Seminoles in a dense hammock near Okeechobee. After a three hours' battle, the Indians were driven from the field.

This was one of the last standing battles of the Indian War in Florida.

However, there was still some trouble with the Indians, who attacked the white settlers, stole their cattle and crops, and kept the early settlers in constant danger of being attacked and killed.

Captain George S. Payne and D. Whiddon were killed by Indians at a trading post on Peace river, just opposite where Fort Choconicla was later established. Captain Payne and Mr. Whiddon were killed on the evening of July 17, 1849, as related by a monument which stands on the spot.

Captain Payne was a visitor at the post and probably was spending the night there when he was killed. The post was entered by the Indians (who probably had some previous trouble with Whiddon, who operated it, because the Indians were never known to start a fight or an argument. They were peaceful until wronged by the whites or until they believed themselves to have been treated wrongly.)

Both Captain Payne and Mr. Whiddon were killed and Whiddon's wife scalped and shot. She feigned death and after the Indians left Payne and Whiddon dead and the post in ashes, Mrs. Whiddon walked and crawled off to a pond, where she hid until some time later, when soldiers found and

rescued her. She finally recovered and lived some years.

It was very seldom that a person who had been scalped survived. The courage and calmness this woman showed in the face of almost certain death illustrates the bravery those pioneer souls of the early days possessed.

She kept her head and managed to conceal her suffering until the Indians left the spot. Then she wrapped her head in a towel and sought aid, which was not long in coming, once the news reached the fort that Whiddon and Payne had been killed.

Just why the argument started and the men were killed is not known, but it is likely that the Indians believed they had been mistreated and sought revenge.

Rev. E. C. Starr, formerly pastor of the First Christian Church of Cornwall, Connecticut, sends us the following information regarding Captain Payne:

"George S. Payne was a sailor, son of Rufus and Mary (Calhoun) Payne, was born in Cornwall, Conn. He was at a meal at the trading post when some Indians fired upon the trader without warning and he was killed by their firing. Both his sisters lived in Cornwall until past eighty years old, one of them dying recently. One of George Payne's brothers (he had two brothers) was a lieutenant in the Civil War and his grandfather or great-grandfather was in the Revolutionary War. His sisters did not believe the Indians intended to kill him, but the trader."

The monument which marks the spot where Payne and Whiddon met their deaths is south of Payne's creek, west of Peace river, near where the

two streams join. The trading post was just east of where the stream was forded, on the road between Fort Choconicla and Fort Hartsuff, or Fort Meade and Fort Ogden.

The monument, now weather-worn and frail, bears the following inscription:

To the Memory of
CAPTAIN GEORGE S. PAYNE
Aged 32 years
A Native of Cornwall, Conn.
Also of
D. WHIDDON
Both Were Killed By a Party of
Seminole Indians
On the Evening of
The 17th Day of July, 1849.
How are the mighty fallen.

The monument is a thin slab, put there many years ago by the Masonic order. It is scarred and broken now, and there is a movement on foot to have it restored and a suitable marker placed on the spot. Other plans call for a fence to be erected about the plot where Payne and Whidden lie, so that it may be preserved and protected.

The monument is near where Payne's creek empties into Peace river, about four miles north of Wauchula and two miles south of Bowling Green, on the south bank of Payne's creek and west of the river.

It is reached by a narrow, winding road which leads from the Dixie Highway at Torrey and winds through the pines and palmettoes to end abruptly at the spot. The road is little used and few people know the exact location of the monument or have ever visited it.

Fort Hartsuff was one of the few important temporary forts established in this county during the early days,

and its establishment followed that of Fort Meade and Fort Choconicla, farther up the river.

In Rerick's *Memoirs of Florida*, page 227, we find this account of Lieutenant George L. Hartsuff, after whom the fort was named:

"Trouble began with the Indians with the wounding of Lieutenant George L. Hartsuff and his son by Billy Bowlegs on December 24, 1855. Hartsuff was in charge of the surveys near the border of Big Cypress, in Fort Simon Drum Prairie. Some of the fertile islands of the swamp were utilized by the Indians for their homes and plantations. The luxuriant pumpkin and bean vines climbed the oak trees and fruited in the branches, and the banana trees grew in magnificent fashion. Bowlegs' banana garden was ravaged by some of Hartsuff's men and when the chief complained and asked for reparation he could obtain neither apology nor compensation. He immediately called his braves together and early next morning Hartsuff and his party were fired on, the lieutenant badly wounded and several of his men less seriously hurt. One of the wounded men carried the news to Fort Myers and a company was sent to the rescue of the disabled party. Hartsuff died of his Florida wounds while a general in the war of 1861-'65."

There was a road leading to Fort Hartsuff from the east, this being shown on maps dated 1850 as being just south of where the Joseph Crews place is located, in the Popash section southeast of Wauchula. The road is shown in section 13, township 34 south, range 25 east.

This road led to the ford which was near where the Atlantic Coast Line

railroad crosses Peace river between Wauchula and Zolfo Springs. Fort Hartsuff was located about two miles southwest of the present site of Wauchula, about on the north side of where Mrs. Holly Brown's grove is now located.

Information from the War Department in Washington says that "Fort Hartsuff was about five miles south of Fort Choconicla and is shown on Ives' map of 1856 as the eastern terminus of a road leading west, by way of Fort Green, to the Manatee river on the west coast. Fort Hartsuff apparently was occupied about August 8, 1851, and again about April 23, 1856."

Maps dated about 1850 do not show any trace of Fort Hartsuff, though the Fort Hartsuff road is shown in the Popash section of the county, east of Peace river and just south of where the Joe Crews place now is located.

Fort Hartsuff was the forerunner of the city of Wauchula, and the first settlement in this section. It afforded protection to the few settlers here at that time. Later there was a meeting place established just west of the present townsite and another just northwest. They have been abandoned and the town of Wauchula is the result.

Fort Meade had been established some time before Fort Hartsuff, and this was one of the largest and most permanent forts in this section, being sixteen miles north of Fort Hartsuff and about ten miles south of Fort Choconicla.

One of the important battles fought in this section took place on June 14th and 16th, 1856, between about forty Indians and seven white men.

CHAPTER IV

An early settler, Willoughby Tillis, lived on a creek a short distance south of Fort Meade. He refused to go into the fort as the others had done and preferred to take his chances against the Seminoles.

On the morning of June 14, 1856, it is related, the Indians slipped out of the swamp and attacked the Tillis family. The news spread quickly and Lieutenant Alderman Carlton and six others, Robert Prine, George Howell, John Henry Hollingsworth, Daniel Carlton, Lott Whidden and Robert Parker, from the two companies of soldiers then stationed at Fort Meade, went to the scene of battle.

As the soldiers approached the place, the Indians fled to the swamp on the opposite side of the house. The soldiers followed suit and a fight ensued, during which Lieutenant Carlton and three other soldiers were killed and Daniel Carlton wounded. Lieutenant Carlton, a grandfather of the present governor of Florida, Doyle E. Carlton, was killed by one of the last shots fired in the battle. He started to take the body of another man upon his horse when a bullet struck him and he called to his comrades who were putting the body upon his horse, "It's too late. They've got me."

The Indians, however, were driven back and the soldiers returned to camp, taking their dead with them and

burying them on a bluff overlooking Peace river, just to the edge of the settlement. Here they lie in unmarked graves to this day. A move started in the spring of 1929 proposes to have these graves suitably marked and a park established on the site of the old fort at Fort Meade.

Two days after the battle of the Willoughby Tillis place the soldiers, who had given chase to the Indians, overtook the band of Seminoles about four miles south of Wauchula, as the Indians were crossing the river. The Indians were carrying their dead with them and could not travel fast.

When the soldiers rode up, they saw some of the Indians swimming the stream while others were on the opposite bank. Opening fire on the Indians they saw, they killed several of them. Then suddenly shots began coming up from beneath the soldiers' feet. They looked down and saw that many Indians were hidden under the bank where the water had washed out caves along the river's edge. Turning their guns upon the Indians at their feet, the soldiers wiped them out quickly, then returned to camp. This was on June 16, 1856.

In this battle Robert Prine was killed and his body was taken back to Fort Meade for burial by the side of his comrades who had fallen two days previous.

Years afterward, an old Indian who was trading at Fort Ogden told of the fight and of the number of Indians in the battle. He said there was about forty Indians. This Indian was among them and he received a wound in the heel, he said. He recognized John Henry Hollingsworth as having been in the fight and the two talked of the battle, each showing the other his wounds.

After these two battles, the Seminoles withdrew to the east side of Peace river and remained there. They had been unwilling to give up their fertile lands west of the river, their homes and gardens, their banana patches and their grazing lands, without a struggle, but they found the white men too strong for them, too daring and too anxious to settle up this new country and to share the fish and game, the fertile soil which so abundantly produced corn, potatoes, peas, bananas, squash, and many other vegetables and fruits that enabled both Indians and whites to live without much effort and yet very comfortably.

The Indians loved their bananas and their watermelons, and do so to this day, but when they saw the white man coming, they unwillingly withdrew to the silent, unbroken forests east of the river, where sluggish streams gave them fish, where the forests gave them meat and shelter, and where the white man, as yet, had not penetrated.

It might be said, in fairness to the Seminole Indians, that they were mistreated a number of times, their lands taken away and their rights disregarded. However, the Indians fought desperately on several occasions, and the white settlers knew that they were in danger of being attacked at any time.

Lands that once belonged to the Indians were taken by the white settlers and the redskins were forced to move over into new territory. After the Seminoles came to Florida (this being a branch of the Creek tribe of Georgia) and set themselves up as an independent nation, they were continually in trouble with the white man.

The Indians did not wish to be removed to the reservations in the Indian Territory west of the Mississippi. They preferred to stay in Florida, where the climate was mild and agreeable, where lands were plentiful and fertile, where game and fish could be had without much effort, and where they would be free to roam the forests at will.

After treaties were made with them at Payne's Landing, Fort King and Fort Meade, the Indians continued to be driven back. They had been given all the land east of Peace river under the terms of a treaty made by General Alexander Macomb in 1839, but just eleven years later (1850) we find that white settlers had pushed across that boundary line and established homes east of the river. (Maps dated 1850 show a family of Thompsons living in the Popash section).

An example of how the Indians were treated is shown by the capture of Osceola, which took place near St. Augustine in October, 1837. Osceola, noted chief of the Seminoles, was born in Georgia, the son of an Englishman named Powell, and a chief's daughter. He was brought to Florida in his infancy and was reared in this state. His early training was devoted chiefly to the art of warfare and he soon became influential with the Seminoles. Osceola married the daughter of a fugitive slave and his wife was taken

from him in 1835. He threatened revenge upon those implicated and was taken prisoner by General Thompson. He was imprisoned at Fort King, near Ocala, where six months later he killed the general and four others and escaped to the Everglades. This brought on the Seminole Indian War.

Osceola knew the Everglades, and here he headed a band of several hundred Indians and fugitive slaves and succeeded in battling successfully against superior numbers for nearly two years.

In October, 1837, Osceola was taken prisoner by General Jessup. Osceola was under a flag of truce and was discussing terms of a treaty when General Jessup's men took him prisoner. This is one of the few times in history where a flag of truce was violated. The capture occurred near St. Augustine and Osceola was afterwards removed to Fort Moultrie, near Charleston, South Carolina, where he soon pined away and died. His body rests there now, and a simple shaft marks his grave.

Two other Indians, Coacoochee and Talmus Hadjo, were taken and were imprisoned in the old fort at St. Augustine. Here they made a most remarkable escape from a dungeon in which they were held prisoners. They were a long time in making preparations and managed to get certain roots by pretending they needed them for medicine. They ate these roots and thus made themselves thin enough to climb through the small window, having studied the surroundings while gathering the roots. They made ropes of the forage bags given them to sleep on and with these ropes managed to climb up to the small window, squeezed themselves through, and

climbed down into the open. Then the two made their way to the headwaters of the Tomoka river, near the Atlantic coast. When the Indians heard how Coacoochee and Talmus Hadjo were treated, they determined to fight it out rather than trust the white man's promises again.

In 1841, when General Worth took command of the army in Florida, he sent for Coacoochee to come and have a talk with him. Coacoochee came and had several talks, but always made the plea that he could not get his band together. Finally, the whites did not believe Coacoochee and they took him prisoner and the few who were with him and deported them to Arkansas.

Another Indian chief whom the whites mistreated was Billy Bowlegs, who was perhaps the best known of all the Indians in this particular section. Billy Bowlegs was a son of Secoffee, the Creek Indian who in 1750 had led the band of runaway Creeks into Florida. These Creeks afterward became known as the Seminoles.

Bowlegs continued as chief of his tribe for many years. He was continually being driven southward from the Alachua district, where the Seminoles first settled after they came to Florida. As the whites came in, Bowlegs and his braves attacked them and the Indians were driven back. As late as 1856 we find Bowlegs living on Peace river, in what is now Hardee county. Here he had a banana patch and it was here that Captain George L. Hartsuff and his men were attacked after Hartsuff's men had eaten Billy Bowlegs' bananas and the Indian chief had asked for compensation for his property and this had been refused.

Bowlegs and his men were driven back again and this time the old In-

dian chief moved east of Peace river, where some years later he was taken prisoner.

Legend here has it that Billy Bowlegs was taken prisoner on the Charlie Apopka creek, in the eastern part of this county, though the exact spot is not known. It is related that Bowlegs came to the soldiers under a flag of truce and was taken prisoner, in much the same manner as was Osceola. The Indians called this creek Chotlo-Popka. Bowlegs afterwards was released and spent the rest of his life with his tribe.

The white settlers kept pushing southward, clearing lands, building roads, bridges, homes, communities. The Indians reluctantly withdrew to the Everglades, where some of them remain to this day. Some are congregated on reservations set apart by the government, while others live outside the reservations, where they eke out a miserable existence in the fastnesses of the Everglades.

Many of them act as guides for hunting parties and their livelihood comes from the few dollars they pick up in this manner, from the alligator

skins and animal furs they sell, and the fish and game they catch. Sewing machines, phonographs, automobiles, and other twentieth century inventions have penetrated the Everglades and the Indians have taken kindly to them and not infrequently tourists find them camped along the main traveled highways, the men fishing in the drainage ditches and listening to the phonographs, while the women are busy making articles of clothing on the sewing machines.

In the big, deep, silent Everglades they stay, fishing, hunting, making beads and moving slowly among the palmettoes and the sawgrass, contented, but still with a trace of bitterness in their hearts against the palefaces, who took their lands and forced them to live on what was left.

Today, the Indians in the reservations are looked after by the government, but those who roam the Everglades have nothing to look forward to but the coming and going of another hunting season, when the white man will bring them a few dollars and some "fire-water," of which they are particularly fond.

CHAPTER V

After the battles at Fort Meade and on Peace river between where Wau-chula and Zolfo Springs are now located, as referred to above, the Seminoles withdrew to the east side of the river and gave no further trouble.

During the years immediately following, or from 1856 to 1865, few settlers came into the territory now known as Hardee county. This section had become Manatee county in 1855, this being an original county, but most of the settlers went into the section around Pine Level and the Manatee river.

Writing about this section as it appeared along about 1860, W. D. Payne, who in 1907 published a book on the life of John W. Hendry, a well-known Baptist preacher of the early days who died in 1907, had the following to say:

"The territory now known as Manatee and DeSoto counties [this was before Hardee county was formed from part of DeSoto] was little more than a vast, dreary solitude, stretching out in every direction, inhabited chiefly by wild beasts and reptiles. Panthers, bears, wolves, wildcats, and alligators were abundant everywhere, especially alligators, these being found in great numbers in every stream or lake affording sufficient depth of water. The prevailing weather during the summer season was of a different type to that usually observed here at the pres-

ent time. The country being new, the stock had not beaten many paths from one pond to another, thus providing outlets from one surface depression to another and the excess of water could escape only by seepage and evaporation, hence in the rainy season the streams were continually out of their banks and the flatwoods a sea of water.

"This condition, producing as it did a corresponding humidity of atmosphere, the prevailing weather was of that murky, nasty type so disagreeable in tropical countries.

"The rains did not come as they do now in local downpours, followed by clearing weather, but were chiefly long drawn out drizzles, the sun not shining for many days at a time. This may read like fiction to many of the present generation, but many of the oldest inhabitants will easily remember that such was the case. Bearing these facts in mind, it will be understood that as the people rushed southward they followed the course of the streams such as Peace creek, Manatee river, and their larger tributaries, thus causing the population to consist of a number of widely separated settlements."

Daniel Carlton, who was mentioned as one of those taking part in the battle at Fort Meade on June 14, 1856, was one of the early settlers in Hardee county. He came to this section

soon after the battle at Fort Meade and settled on what is now called Troublesome creek, on the highway between Wauchula and Ona, where the Ceylon Bostick place now is.

At that settlement there was established the first school in this county. This was in a log house and was upstairs. It was opened especially for Mr. Carlton's children, and a teacher was employed by him, but the neighbors, few that they were, were invited to send their children in to this school. If they could pay, very well and good; if not, then they might send the children anyway. This was the only school south of the settlement at Fort Meade, sixteen miles to the north.

The religious and spiritual side of life was looked after as well as the educational side, we learn from records of the early days from old timers who had a part in this development of a commonwealth out of a vast area of woods and streams, sickly ponds and silent plains.

Maple Branch, which later became New Zion church, was the first church organized south of the south prong of the Alafia river. Rev. John W. Hendry was one of the charter members of this church and retained his membership in this church for more than forty years. This church was organized in 1867 and has often been called the mother church of the Manatee, now the Peace River Association.

Rev. Hendry traveled all over this section in those days, covering all the territory from the south prong of the Alafia river to Fort Ogden, and from Peace river to Sarasota bay, organizing churches at Fort Ogden, Joshua Creek, Pine Level, New Hope, Fort Hartsuff, Midway, Pine Grive, Bee Ridge and Benevolence. Nearly all of

them, some under a different name, continue until this day.

It was during those years that Rev. W. P. McEwen, a minister of the Methodist faith, came to this part of Florida. He worked with Rev. Hendry and these two saintly gentlemen went side by side, through the pine woods and swamps, preaching the gospel and organizing churches. Today there are hundreds of descendants of these two pioneers scattered throughout southwest Florida, and the names of Hendry and McEwen, along with those of Altman, Southerland, Sparkman, Carlton, Smith, Whiddon and others, have long been linked with the development and growth of this section. Descendants of those pioneers are legion.

In 1872 Maple Branch, or what was then called Fort Green church, decided to change the location of the church to a place nearer Rev. Hendry's home. The change was made and the name changed to New Zion.

About this time a flood tide of immigrants began coming in and the population showed a substantial increase. Churches were strengthened and congregations were increased.

There were seven and possibly eight churches in Manatee county at that time, with memberships ranging from twenty to fifty each. There was only one Baptist Association in all South Florida, and this was known as the South Florida Baptist Association.

Rev. McEwen was a local preacher, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and he preached the gospel of Methodism with great power throughout all this section.

The relationship between Revs. Hendry and McEwen was like that of David and Jonathan. They made a strong gospel team and side by side they rode

on horseback through the sparsely settled country to reach their widely scattered appointments, preaching the gospel from the same pulpits, sharing the same hardships and joys.

The preaching place nearest where Wauchula now stands was northwest of where the town now is, about where Moore's mill is located. It was a little log hut in the forest and was built many years before the railroad came through this section in 1885.

The churches were too poor to support regular pastors and salaries were simply out of the question. The preachers usually kept some livestock and with the game and fish that could easily be had and the pumpkins, corn, potatoes, etc., which the land yielded abundantly, they managed to live as well as those whom they served.

Revs. Hendry and McEwen rode on ponies, carrying saddle-bags, blanket, Bible and hymnbook. The settlers would come for many miles around to enjoy the services. Often they camped for days at a time at the meeting place. Some drove horses, others mules, while still others drove oxen and many came on horseback.

To cross the swollen streams, the preachers often had to swim their ponies and they had many narrow escapes crossing Peace river, Payne's creek and the other streams whose raging waters threatened to prevent their filling an appointment.

Schools were few and far between, with terms of only a few months during the year. The buildings were of logs, poorly lighted and poorly equipped. Many of them were private schools, while others were community affairs, with teachers being employed by the patrons. Teachers were paid only meager salaries and twenty-five dollars a month was considered a fair-

ly good teaching wage during those early days. Later, the salaries were increased until in 1895 we find some teachers were being paid as high as fifty dollars a month.

However, the education was thorough, the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic being drilled into the pupils until they became proficient. None of the finely equipped buildings of today were dreamed of then, but the pioneer children were given the fundamentals which enabled them to read and write and to carry on business efficiently. So that when the pioneer fathers and mothers passed on, their children were competent to take up the duties of managing the estates, marketing the cattle, constructing churches and schools and bridges and roads, and in general building a county and state out of a wilderness.

Mail came to Punta Gorda and other towns by boat, while it was also brought to Fort Meade from Tampa. Mail was carried from Fort Meade to Fort Ogden by foot, and a man named Bill Johnson, whom all the settlers knew as "Acre-Foot," carried the mail. This was a distance of some fifty miles, and Johnson carried the mail on foot, making a round trip twice a week. Often his brother, Jim Johnson, took his place and made the round trip the same as his brother did.

The Johnsons were big, double-jointed men and were very strong men and fast walkers. It is said that on one occasion "Acre-Foot" Johnson bagged a large buck on the edge of Fort Meade, threw the namil across his shoulder, and took it into the settlement.

Old timers chuckle and wink mischievously as they relate that Johnson finally gave up his job of carrying the

mail because the government wouldn't allow him to carry passengers.

Cattle and oranges were hauled to Punta Gorda and Fort Myers in the early days, where many of them were sold to the Spaniards and paid for in Spanish gold, or doubloons, which were then valued at \$16.00.

Others hauled their oranges to Tampa, where they marketed them for one cent apiece. The trip from this section to Tampa required seven days. Within three days after leaving this vicinity with teams of oxen hauling the carts of oranges, the settlers would arrive at Six Mile Creek, near Tampa, where they would spend the night. The following morning they would drive into town, dispose of their oranges, and return to the camping place that night. The next day they would continue the journey homeward, arriving in this section at the end of the third day, seven days after they left for Tampa.

Many times several carts went to-

gether in a sort of caravan and all camped together. The oxen would be turned loose to graze at night, while some of those in the party were designated to watch them. On several occasions the beasts would get on the road and head for home, maintaining a steady gait until they would be overtaken and returned to the camp grounds. A bell would be put on one of the oxen to help keep track of where they were grazing.

As settlers came, they found the climate mild and the soil fertile, so they would write their friends, telling of the wonderful land they had found and urging their friends to join them here. Thus it is natural that Floridans boost the section where they live. It appears that those early settlers were really the forerunners of the present Florida realtors.

Thus new settlers came, and new communities sprang up, but progress and development was very slow indeed until about the year 1885.

CHAPTER VI

During the administration of Governor William D. Bloxham, who became governor of Florida in 1881, a deal was made with Hamilton Disston and his associates, of Philadelphia, whereby Disston and his associates secured four million acres of land in Florida for the sum of one million dollars. Most of this land was classed as "swamp and overflowed" land. Disston and his associates sold most of the land to settlers for \$1.25 an acre.

The Disston sale was made after Florida's Internal Improvement Fund seemed hopelessly involved in litigation. The fund, consisting of some thirteen million acres of land mostly designated as swamp and overflowed land, was granted by the legislature to encourage the building of railroads, canals, and other means of transportation. Prior to the War Between the States it had been pledged to guarantee the seven per cent. interest on \$3,597,000 worth of bonds issued for the building of railroads and canals. The war rendered it impossible for the railroads to pay the interest due and they were seized and sold, not bringing enough to pay the debt. Thus there was a large and increasing interest account against the Internal Improvement Fund. The mismanagement of this fund immediately after the war added to the embarrassment

and the creditors, during Governor Reed's administration (1869-1873) appealed to the United States court.

The fund was so hopelessly involved in litigation that the management of the fund was taken from the state and controlled by the United States court.

Florida was practically at a standstill. For many years the taxable property had been assessed at about \$31,000,000. The constitution forbade the issuing of bonds or paying the debt. While the legislature granted lands for the building of railroads and other improvements, the judgment which stood in United States court prevented a good title being given and capitalists wouldn't invest. The state could not develop without transportation facilities and growth then seemed at an end.

It was then that the sale of 4,000,000 acres of "swamp and overflowed" land was sold to Disston and his associates. This released the debt from the control of the United States court and placed it again under the management of the state officials.

It was then that growth began anew. Large sums of money were invested within the state and taxable resources showed a growth of more than one hundred per cent. in four years. For several years after the Disston sale, more miles of railroads

were built in Florida, according to the population and wealth, than in any other state.

The population in those years increased faster than at any period in the history of Florida, and the increase was greater than in any other state.

Railroads were built, orange groves were set out and vegetable culture became one of the principal industries. Attention was given to education and there was considerable progress made along that line. Establishment of the Agricultural College at Lake City, which later was moved to Gainesville and became the University of Florida, was one of those things taking place soon after the Disston land sale.

Even as late as 1880, this section was yet to see a railroad, a bridge, a highway, or any of the modern improvements we now enjoy. Eli English and D. Whitten were the proud possessors of top buggies along about 1885. These were the only top buggies known in this section. Travel was mostly by ox team or on horseback, and it was little traveling that the pioneers did. Streams were forded and roads were mere trails through the pine woods.

Fort Green and Crewsville were the only post offices in the county and there was nothing at either of these places but a trading post and a hatful of goods. Bowling Green, Wauchula, Zolfo Springs and other thriving communities which now go to make up the county, were undreamed of as late as 1880.

Captain K. B. Harvey, an engineer and surveyor whose work kept him in this section for many months from 1878 to 1882, writing to a friend in Punta Gorda not many years ago, had

the following to say regarding this section:

"During the time from 1878 to 1882," he writes, "while Tampa was yet a village and South Florida a wilderness, without railroad transportation south of Jacksonville, I was connected at various times with the Florida Railway and Navigation Company (now the Seaboard Air Line), the Florida Southern Railway (now the Atlantic Coast Line), the Disston Land Company, and various other projects in the capacity of engineer and surveyor, which gave me an exceptional knowledge of the lands and geography of Florida and an acquaintance with the officials more or less identified with the plans of development that have made Florida what it is today."

"Wipe all the buildings off the map south of Bartow," Captain Harvey continues, "and try to think of a Spanish salt fish palmetto shack at Captiva and one at Gasparilla, post offices at Fort Myers, Punta Rassa, Charlotte Harbor, Pine Level, Fort Ogden, Joshua Creek, Fort Green, Crewsville, and Fort Meade, and a store at each place with a hatful of goods, with mail two or three times a month, and bacon, coffee and brogan shoes coming in once a month on Captain Tom Hodgson's little tub of a sailing schooner Mallory, about the size of a box car, taking back 'gator hides and a few oranges; a scattering settlement and a log cabin here and there through the woods. You will get an idea of pioneer life, sand trails and conditions where now are young cities with thousands of homes and the world's greatest orange groves and where you now burn the wind in high-powered automobiles on magnificent highways, luxurious parlor cars and in constant

touch with the outside world, with daily newspapers and a network of telegraph and telephone wires and broadcasted radio. No! You can't imagine it. It is a memory dear to the few old timers (I can count the living almost on my ten fingers) who lived through it all. I realize now the size of the job, the hardships and how wild and woolly much of it was, and I take my hat off to the boys of the early days who thought nothing of it at the time and regarded it just as a part of the day's doings.

"I examined, prospected and explored over what now comprises Polk, Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Glades, Okeechobee, Lee, Hendry and Collier counties, alone for months, banqueting on grits, bacon and sugarless coffee, sleeping the sweetest of dreams with my feet to a fire and my saddle for a pillow, two red rain-proof wool blankets and mother earth for a couch, the down-pouring rain or the starry sky for a roof, lulled to sleep by the murmuring breeze, the souging pines, the chatter of birds, the racket of wild animal life, and guarded over by my faithful Florida pony.

"I tramped over the great phosphate deposits worth untold millions today, not knowing their value. I could have bought them for twenty-five cents an acre. They seemed to me just a curious rock formation. I sent samples to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington at the time."

The Florida Southern Railroad had acquired the old railroad charter and land grant of the Gainesville, Ocala and Charlotte Harbor railroad, which would expire on March 5, 1885, and to hold this charter and secure these lands immediate railroad construction was necessary.

Construction was ordered south from Bartow, destination unknown; possibly the prairie route, to Punta Rassa, but preferably the north side where the town of Charlotte Harbor now stands.

As construction from Bartow progressed, it was decided to build a hotel and a townsite attraction. Thus the hotel, pleasure pier, grounds, etc., at Punta Gorda were constructed. The late Governor Albert W. Gilchrist was resident engineer in charge of this work.

When the railroad was built through what is now Hardee county, many new settlers came. Many of the most prominent families now in the county first came here between 1885 and 1895 and a goodly number of them found employment with the railroad. Others taught school, while still others opened stores or made a livelihood raising cattle and farming.

In 1887 the county of Manatee was divided and DeSoto county created. The county seat of Manatee, which had been at Pine Level, was moved to Braidentown (now Bradenton) and that of DeSoto to Arcadia.

Hardee county was not dreamed of at that time and it was not until 1906, nearly twenty years later, that county division was talked of here.

In the early nineties a great tide of immigration began flowing into the county, building up the towns along the Atlantic Coast Line railroad and pushing out in every direction.

Homes, schools and churches were built, land cleared, roads opened through the forests and bridges built over the rivers and creeks.

The towns of Bowling Green, Wauchula, Zolfo Springs and others in this section sprang into being after the railroad came through. Some of them

were settlements prior to that time, but after the railroad was built they began to grow and prosper. More about them will be given later.

There were few schools in what is now Hardee county as late as 1895. In that year we find, by reference to records now in the office of the superintendent of public instruction of DeSoto county, that a number of new schools were established by order of the school board.

An entry in the records dated June 4, 1895, shows the following new schools established:

Brushy Creek, located in section 15, township 34, range 24. W. P. Ritch was named supervisor.

Popash, with W. J. Jackson as supervisor.

Wauchula, with D. M. Cason as supervisor.

Florence, on Payne's Creek, with J. B. Sauls as supervisor.

The board ordered that schools may begin any time agreed upon by the patrons after July 1st.

T. J. Sparkman, long prominent as a school official and minister, was superintendent of instruction at that time.

A new school was established at the northeast quarter of section 7, township 33, range 24. John Bostick was supervisor. This was known as the Enterprise school.

On August 6, 1895, the following resolution was introduced into the minutes of the school board:

"Resolved, that it is the policy and purpose of the board to aid as far as possible in the building and furnishing of good school houses in the county. The board will help those most in need of help first and others from time

to time as the finances will permit till all are helped who need it.

"For this purpose the following appropriations are made:

"Oak Grove school building, \$100.

"Enterprise, \$30.00.

"Spring Hill, \$30.00."

On November 5, 1895, permission was granted to move Harmony school for the present year to the south side of Charlie Apopka creek.

C. J. Carlton was teacher of the school at that time, and his salary was \$50.00 a month. He had an assistant who was paid the salary of \$25.00 per month. The name of this assistant is not mentioned in the minutes. He perhaps had not been selected at that time.

The following other well-known citizens taught at schools as follows:

S. W. Conroy at Scott's school; Henry Smith at Lemon Grove; J. H. Brown at Enterprise; J. J. Parrish at Spring Hill; Joe Crews at Oak Grove; R. D. Moore as principal and Helen Carlton as assistant at Wauchula.

The board met on September 2, 1895, and selected the following grading committee for September examinations: R. D. Moore, C. J. Carlton and George W. Harp. The board appropriated \$100 to the Wauchula school on the following day, September 3, 1895.

On October 8, 1895, N. M. Bryan was appointed supervisor at Bowling Green.

On January 2, 1896, Lemon Grove school was moved to its present location, being moved a mile and a quarter east.

Under date of August 3, 1897, M. S. Stephens and Alice Heard were listed

as teachers at Wauchula school. The school closed on December 29, 1897.

On June 7, 1898, a petition from the Zolfo Springs district was presented asking for an election to be held to establish a sub-school district in this

district to be known as Sub-district No. Four. The petition was granted and an election held on July 6, 1898. The election carried and S. L. Griffin, J. L. Skipper and Cornelius Crews were named as trustees for the district.

CHAPTER VII

Along about the year 1901, this section of DeSoto county started into the vegetable and citrus growing business on an extensive scale. In that year more than 8,000 crates of beans were shipped from Wauchula.

Of course, the growing of citrus fruits had been going on for many years, as has been related before, and considerable money was made from the sale of oranges and grapefruit.

Vegetable production had been going on on a small scale before 1901, but in this year the first shipments in any quantity were made and settlers in this section realized the opportunities which this industry offered.

The county enjoyed a good substantial growth during the period from 1895 to 1905, and on March 15, 1904, the first banking institution in what is now Hardee county was opened for business.

The bank opened in the store operated by Carlton and Carlton and located at the southwest corner of Main street and Fifth avenue, was known as Carlton and Carlton, bankers. The institution was not incorporated when it was first established and we find in advertisements of the bank that the following officers were connected with the bank:

Albert Carlton, president; Charlie J. Carlton, cashier; Chas. A. Roe, assistant cashier.

This section grew so rapidly and new settlers located here in so great numbers that in 1902 the town of Wauchula was incorporated.

In 1905 a book containing the census report of Florida was issued and contained some valuable information on this part of the state.

DeSoto county had a population of 12,446 in 1905. The population of the county had increased 46.7 per cent. in the years from 1901 to 1905. That of the state of Florida increased 17.2 per cent.

In 1900 the following was the population of each precinct in the county: Fort Green, 314; Wauchula, 499; Lily, 480; Pine Level, 230; Charlotte Harbor, 266; Grove City, 74; Punta Gorda, 1,047; town of Punta Gorda, 860; Fort Ogden, 495; Arcadia, 1,449; town of Arcadia, 799; Crewsville, 411; Zolfo, 489; Venus, 281; Fort Bassinger, 165; Avon Park, 225; Bowling Green, 440; Brownville, 283; Nocatee, 277; Owens, 233; Cleveland, 141; Bunker, 248. Total, 8,047.

In 1905 the population was: Fort Green, 300; Wauchula precinct, 1,404; Wauchula town, 800; Lily, 400; Pine Level, 168; Charlotte Harbor, 254; Grove City, 92; Punta Gorda precinct, 1,333; Punta Gorda town, 1,177; Fort Ogden precinct, 746; Fort Ogden town, 380; Arcadia precinct, 2,418; Arcadia town, 1,557; Crewsville, 400; Zolfo,

760; Venus, 234; Fort Bassinger, 70; Avon Park, 534; Bowling Green precinct, 810; Bowling Green town, 300; Brownville, 685; Nocatee, 616; Owens, 275; Cleveland, 98; Bunker, 356; Precinct No. 21 (not named—Arcadia post office), 93; Castalia, 100; Ona, 300.

The population in 1905 was divided as follows: Whites, 10,817; negroes, 1,629.

The value of farm products of DeSoto county at that time was \$3,430,572.00, or about one-tenth of the total value of farm crops in the entire state.

In 1906 this part of DeSoto county became engaged in an effort for county division. The history of this fight and its final success in 1921, fifteen years later, is most interesting and has a direct bearing on the growth and development of what we know as Hardee county.

On Monday, April 2, 1906, a delegation composed of four men went to Punta Gorda to ascertain the sentiment of the lower end of the county in the matter of county division. It must be borne in mind that what was then DeSoto county comprised all the territory now included in the counties of Highlands, Hardee, DeSoto, Charlotte and Glades counties.

The delegation was composed of Messrs. J. D. Southerland, Charlie J. Carlton, Elam B. Carlton and George M. Goolsby.

A telegram had been sent to Editor Adrian P. Jordan, editor of the Punta Gorda Herald, on Sunday afternoon before the committee arrived Monday.

The following interesting account is taken from the Florida Advocate of Friday, April 6, 1906:

"The Wauchula delegation expected

to meet a few of the Punta Gorda citizens and talk the matter over. They were therefore greatly and happily surprised to find about one hundred of Punta Gorda's leading citizens assembled, and enthusiastic and unanimous sentiment of the people for county division.

"On motion, Hon. Geo. W. McLane was elected chairman and Geo. M. Goolsby secretary.

"Editor A. P. Jordan explained why the meeting had been called and also that Judge J. P. Cochran was present by request of friends present, who wished to hear and know what was done with a view to his possible approval of the action taken, that the meeting might endorse his candidacy.

"On request of the chair, Mr. Elam B. Carlton then spoke at length, setting forth the advantages of dividing the county into three parts, as nearly equal as possible in territory and resources. He argued that now is the most opportune time that we will have for ten years to come, as the next legislature will have to make a new apportionment of senators and representatives, after which no new counties will be created for ten years. He presented convincing reasons showing that the creation of new counties will not add to the burden of the tax payers anything except the cost of building a courthouse and jail. Most of the county officers are paid fees and commissions, not salaries, and they would be the only ones affected to disadvantage. The expenses of the circuit court are paid almost wholly by the civil litigants and the convicted offenders.

"But were it not so, the reduction in mileage paid jurors, witnesses and court officers would more than make up any difference. This, to say nothing of

the immense convenience resulting from the people having their courthouse very near their homes. Mr. Carlton further argued that DeSoto county has ample territory and resources for three counties and the formation of two new counties would give us three representatives instead of one in the legislature. His remarks and arguments were loudly applauded.

"Col. Isaac H. Trabue followed with a strong argument for division.

"Judge J. B. Cochran, responding to a request from the chair, made a manly speech in which he explained that he was opposed to county division and could not conscientiously favor the proposed scheme.

"The discussion continued with Messrs. C. J. Carlton and Elam B. Carlton, of Wauchula, and several Punta Gorda gentlemen participating, when a motion was made to test the sentiment of the meeting, that the proposed division of the county be endorsed. The motion was put and carried unanimously and with great enthusiasm.

"At this point it was stated and seemed to be accepted that the division contemplated would be by lines running east and west, the first passing at or near Calvinia and the second at or near Fort Ogden; that is, the northern county would extend from the Polk county line to Calvinia, DeSoto county would be left between Calvinia and Fort Ogden, while the southern county would reach from Fort Ogden to the Lee county line.

"In compliance with a motion adopted, the chair appointed Messrs. I. H. Trabue, Chas. G. Davis, Jos. H. Concannon, K. B. Harvey and A. P. Jordan a committee to recommend to the meeting a candidate to run for the

legislature in the primaries on a platform favoring the proposed division. The committee retired to a side room where they stayed quite a long time urging one of their members, A. P. Jordan, to allow his name to be presented as a candidate. He finally agreed that, if acceptable to Wauchula, he would yield. The Wauchula delegation was called in and cordially endorsed Mr. Jordan.

"Thereupon, on request of the committee, Mr. E. B. Carlton, in a neat speech, presented to the meeting the name of the gentleman agreed upon, which was received with great applause.

"In response to calls, the nominee made a few remarks evincing gratitude for the honor conferred, saying he realized the responsibility of the position in which he was placed and promising to do his best to win in the primaries and, if finally elected, to use his best effort to carry out the wishes of the people.

"On motion, the following campaign committee was appointed: For Wauchula, A. G. Smith, C. J. Carlton, Geo. M. Goolsby; for Punta Gorda, J. H. Concannon, C. G. Davis, B. M. Wade.

"The meeting then adjourned subject to the call of the chairman."

In the primary, which was held on Tuesday, May 15, 1906, the three candidates received votes as follows: J. B. Cochran, 541; W. H. Hooker, 649; A. P. Jordan, 770.

Jordan and Hooker were candidates in the run-off. The vote stood, Hooker, 1,000; Jordan, 966.

The north and south ends of the county gave 496 for division, the vote being 915 for division and 419 against it.

County division again came to the

front in 1907. In that year, on March 13th, a mass meeting was held at the opera house in Wauchula for the purpose of "pushing the matter before the coming legislature."

Judge D. M. Cason was chairman of the meeting and Col. B. D. Hiers, secretary.

A number of short talks were made and everyone seemed heartily in favor of vigorously pushing the matter before the legislature.

A committee composed of Messrs. Albert Carlton, A. G. Smith, Dr. Y. E.

Wright, Col. B. D. Hiers, Charlie J. Carlton, H. C. Sparkman and Geo. M. Goolsby was appointed to "look after the matter and get it in shape to bring before the legislature."

A. G. Smith was elected chairman of the committee and B. D. Hiers secretary. The committee collected data, etc., on the county and presented this to the legislature.

The county commissioners at that time were: B. L. Holzendorf, chairman; D. J. Farabee, D. S. Williams and C. Keen.

CHAPTER VIII

On Tuesday, September 10th, 1907, a meeting of county divisionists was held in the opera house in Wauchula. The gathering was well attended and the following resolution passed:

"Resolved that we are unalterably opposed to any further expenditure by the county commissioners of the county funds in the erection of any new county buildings until the matter of county division is settled."

E. L. Richardson, of Avon Park, was chairman of the meeting and Francis K. Adams, of Punta Gorda, secretary.

On March 21st, 1908, a mass meeting was held in Wauchula for the purpose of nominating a candidate for representative in the state legislature on the county division platform.

At ten-thirty in the morning the crowd assembled in the hall of the Peace River Hotel building and heard a talk by Hon. Duncan U. Fletcher, who was introduced by Mayor Elam B. Carlton.

In the afternoon the county divisionists held a meeting and a committee drew up resolutions endorsing the candidacy of Col. I. E. Barwick as a candidate for the state senate from Manatee county. Col. Barwick was in favor of county division.

W. W. Bateman was elected by the assembly as a candidate for the legis-

lature as representative.

Col. F. A. Whitney, of Punta Gorda, was chairman of the meeting and Rev. J. H. Crosby, of Wauchula, secretary.

It was proposed to divide DeSoto county into three parts, as has been stated, including the Wauchula, Arcadia and Punta Gorda sections. Arcadia was to remain the county seat of DeSoto county and the county in which Wauchula was to be the county seat it was proposed to call Seminole county. At this time there was no Seminole county in Florida. The section of which Punta Gorda is the center it was proposed to call Eden county.

It must be remembered that travel was slow in those days, and one of the arguments advanced in favor of county division was that it required from one to three days for residents of the county to reach Arcadia, depending on the distance they lived from the county seat.

Another argument the divisionists advanced was that the county tax was then eighteen mills and if the county were divided as proposed the tax would not increase. They claimed they were not being given a square deal in the matter of benefits from taxation.

There were twenty-seven schools in the proposed Seminole county, including schools at Avon Park, Popash,

Wauchula, Bowling Green, Fort Green, Zolfo Springs and other communities.

One of the chief arguments of the anti-divisionists was that taxes would be higher if the county were divided. They contended that while the millage was high, the valuation was low.

Real estate assessment for the county was at that time \$2,580,110 and the assessed valuation of personal property was \$706,110. The population as of December 31, 1906, was 12,446.

The per capita tax of the county was given as \$4.75.

J. H. Brown, who then lived at Zolfo Springs, was a candidate for representative on the anti-division platform.

It was pointed out by some of the candidates that prohibition was an issue, but the county had had prohibition since 1895, and that was not the issue. Of course, anyone could have whiskey shipped from any of the distilleries, but at that time it was "impossible to get good whiskey in the county for medical purposes, let alone for anything else," as one writer put it.

The campaign was a bitter one, and on Tuesday, May 19th, 1908, the election was held. The vote was: for senator: I. E. Barwick, 821; Joseph H. Humphries, 1214. For representative: W. W. Bateman, 1023; Joseph H. Brown, 1227.

And so county division was defeated again. The candidates who ran on the county division platform lost out in Arcadia, Lily, Pine Level, Crewsville, Avon Park, Oak Hill, Owens, Nocatee and other voting precincts in the central part of the county. Bowling Green and Zolfo Springs likewise gave majorities against county division.

The advocates for division immediately began to lay plans for the next campaign. However, they did not make a very active fight the next year, and the issue was lost again. This time the divisionists apparently lost no ground but gained little.

The vote stood: For representative: for county division, W. C. Braddock, 503; against county division, Joseph H. Brown, 661.

In 1911 the county commissioners ordered an election, which was held on Tuesday, November 14th of that year. The election was called for the purpose of determining where the county seat should be located. The Arcadia and Zolfo Springs districts wanted the courthouse, and the vote was 1027 to 796 in favor of the county seat remaining at Arcadia.

The cornerstone for the new courthouse was laid at Arcadia on Friday, May 17th, 1912. The courthouse cost in the neighborhood of \$120,000.

On Tuesday, May 28th, 1912, F. M. Cooper received 1019 votes for the state senate against 885 for J. H. Humphries. While the matter of county division was not a main issue in that campaign, it was generally known that Cooper favored division, and after election the exponents of county division took renewed courage.

In the primary of June 2nd, 1914, W. C. Langford, candidate for representative on the anti-division platform, won by a majority of about 200 over E. C. Thornhill, who favored county division.

Mr. Langford was again successful in 1916, when he defeated S. F. J. Tra-bue. The election was held on Tuesday, June 13th, and the vote stood: Will C. Langford, 1771. S. F. J. Tra-bue, 1054. For state senator, A. M.

Wilson received 1593 votes as against 1117 for C. P. Parrish.

In 1918 the county division issue was up again, of course, but this time it was again defeated by a small margin.

Wilbur W. Whitehurst was candidate for the house of representatives on the county division platform and John B. Cochran was his opponent. The county division candidate was defeated by something like 100 majority.

Two years later, in 1920, the county divisionists made a strong fight and were victorious. The election, held on Tuesday, June 8th, 1920, resulted in Frank M. Cooper being elected to the senate and E. J. Etheredge to the house. Both were county division candidates.

Just here it must be recalled that all during the fourteen years the county division fight had been going on, the county was becoming more prosperous all the time. Settlers came in great numbers and new communities came into being. Moore Haven, down in the Everglades section of the county, on the southwestern rim of

Lake Okeechobee, was thriving; Avon Park and Sebring, over on the ridge section, were getting their share of newcomers and growing accordingly. Orange groves were being set out by the hundreds of acres there. Punta Gorda was enjoying its fishing industry and some cattle raising was going on there, too; the Wauchula section was growing vegetables and citrus fruits and things were booming generally throughout the county.

It was deemed best to divide the county into five instead of three parts, as Moore Haven, Avon Park and Sebring would be too far away from the county seats if the three-county plan were carried out. Likewise, the county divisionists wanted the support of these communities and they realized this was a plan that appealed to them as being most equitable.

Many smaller communities had come into being throughout all this vast section and the population had increased until in 1920 more than 3,500 voted in the primary election.

Thus it was believed that by dividing the county into four or five parts instead of three every section would be served to the best advantage.

CHAPTER IX

The following were some of the reasons advanced in favor of county division:

First, it is the history of all sections of this and other states that small counties develop more rapidly than large ones.

Second, DeSoto county is amply large enough to divide into five prosperous counties, bringing the affairs of each community closer home and affording the opportunity to develop the varied industries—agricultural, horticultural, stock raising and manufacturing—more rapidly in the various sections adaptable for each branch of industry.

Third, the entire taxable property will be assessed in small counties where it is impossible for the tax assessor to get it all in a county covering such a vast amount of territory as DeSoto.

Fourth, it is claimed by the anti-divisionists that the smaller counties would increase taxation. But we contend that taxes would not be higher as more assessible property would be placed on the tax books, which would lower the millage.

Fifth, if you wish to interview the tax collector you will find that he is so overworked that it is impossible for him to attend to the duties of the office in a satisfactory manner or

close his tax books on time. This is a condition that has obtained for a number of years and is not a reflection on the ability of the tax collector.

Sixth, the opportunities in small counties for one man or set of men to dictate would be lessened.

Seventh, the creation of four new counties would give south Florida greater representation in the legislature, thus enhancing the opportunity for legislation favorable to this rapidly growing section of the state.

Eighth, you will hear the argument that we will have too many officers to pay and that the expense of building court houses and jails would be so great that these small counties could not stand it. But let us see as regards that statement. In the first place, there is but one salaried officer in the county. That is the superintendent. The other officers are working under the fee system, which is making fat jobs for them that they naturally dislike to relinquish. Not many years ago on an assessed valuation of \$4,500,000 Arcadians said they could build and equip a courthouse costing \$125,000 and "never feel it." The assessed valuation of the county in 1919 was \$10,352,000.

Ninth, take the proposed Highlands county, for instance. The interests are entirely different from those of other

sections of the present county. We have thousands and thousands of acres of citrus groves coming into bearing, which will make this one of the richest sections of the state in taxable values. Moore Haven has its trucking and general farming industries and can easily support a county. Wauchula has its trucking, citrus fruit and general farming industries creating taxable values sufficient to maintain its own county. Punta Gorda has its fishing industries, trucking, stock raising, etc. which will care for that county. Arcadia, we know, is able to care for herself. She admits it.

Tenth, It is a well-known fact that those opposing county division are the cattlemen, the abstractors and the politicians. They have waxed rich out of the pickings of this vast county. But should we allow the welfare of the many to be hampered in order to cater to and enrich the few? If it is not a personal matter with the men mentioned, then why are they so bitterly opposed to county division? Why did the anti-divisionists secretly endeavor to enter into a pact to divide the county east and west near Gardner and allow Moore Haven a little shirt-tail full of townships and get rid of her? The cattlemen, abstractors and politicians wanted to hold the remainder of this vast territory for their own personal gain.

The arguments put forth by those opposed to county division likewise were many. They contended that taxes would be increased as the expense of maintaining county officers and erection of county buildings would be great.

Another point was that it would reduce the revenue hotels and boarding

houses in Arcadia received during court terms and on other occasions when people in the outlying districts were compelled to visit the county seat.

They contended that the county was a great cattle raising section and that if the county were divided the cattleman would be deprived of his rights and that it would conflict with his interests.

The revenue of county officers would be cut down, they declared, and the lawyers and abstract companies would lose business if the county were divided.

They contended that there would be county line fences and the cattle could not graze except in the confines of the county where they belonged.

The campaign that spring was a hot one, with the lines clearly drawn and the county division to the forefront. County division candidates for the senate and house of representatives were: Frank M. Cooper, for the senate, and Dr. E. J. Etheredge for the house of representatives.

Those against county division brought out John A. Graham for the senate and J. L. Sauls for representative.

Those communities voting in favor of the county division candidates included: Avon Park, Charlotte Harbor, Lake Branch, Moore Haven, Punta Gorda, Sebring and Wauchula.

Those voting a majority in favor of candidates who were opposed to county division were: Lily, Limestone, Brownville, Bowling Green, Zolfo Springs, Gardner, Fort Ogden, Nocatee, Crewsville, Fort Green, Ona and Arcadia.

The vote was close in many pre-

cincts, while in many others one side or the other won in a walk.

County division won by a good majority, however, Cooper defeating Graham by a majority of 779 votes and Etheredge winning over Sauls by 484.

The total vote in each precinct was: Avon Park, 209; Lily, 47; Limestone, 48; Charlotte Harbor, 53; Brownville, 51; Lake Branch, 53; Bowling Green, 191; Zolfo Springs, 156; Gardner, 83; Fort Ogden, 98; Nocatee, 112; Crewsville, 35; Fort Green, 80; Ona, 107; Moore Haven, 259; Punta Gorda, 278; Sebring, 172; North Labelle, 52; Arcadia, 696; and Wauchula, 749.

It is interesting to note that Wauchula polled more votes than any other precinct in the county. In Wauchula the vote was: Cooper, 566; Graham, 56; Etheredge, 647; Sauls, 87.

A. L. Durrance was re-elected county clerk; Joe L. Hampton won the sheriff's race; J. Irvin Walden won for county judge; C. A. Crews, tax assessor; C. P. Hull, tax collector; P. G. Shaver, county superintendent; S. T. Langford, registration officer; W. R. Gramling, C. H. Mitchell and H. A. Ware won as members of the school board; and J. Ed Raulerson, J. G. Johnson, James Carlton, Ira Thompson and J. L. Townsend were elected county commissioners.

Duncan U. Fletcher was elected senator; Herbert J. Drane to Congress; and Cary A. Hardee governor.

Immediately after the results of the election became known the citizens of Wauchula began to plan for a monster celebration to be called the "victory celebration," to be held on July 3rd, the day being Saturday. However, about the same time the Commercial Club of Arcadia was busy making plans to entertain the division-

ists at a big picnic at Arcadia, and so the celebration in Wauchula was called off.

On Wednesday, April 20th, at one clock in the afternoon, the news was flashed over the wires from Tallahassee thus: "Allies have captured central powers seventy-one to nothing," which meant that the house had voted 71 to 0 for the division of DeSoto county into five parts, forming the counties of Hardee, DeSoto, Charlotte, Highlands and Glades.

The news was received with an outburst of acclaim throughout Wauchula and this section generally. Church and school bells rang, whistles blew and auto horns blasted out their noisy welcome to the new counties.

It is interesting to note here that this county was named in honor of Governor Cary A. Hardee. The divisionists had at first proposed to call this county Seminole, but this idea was abandoned when the name Seminole was given to that section just north of Orlando, which was formed into Seminole county in April, 1913. Sanford was chosen as the county seat. Later it was suggested that this county be called Cherokee. Other suggested names were Goolsby county, Wauchula county, etc., but when the act finally was introduced, it was decided that it should be named in honor of the governor. Thus the section around Wauchula became Hardee county.

In the division of DeSoto county, old DeSoto was left the same size as the new county of Hardee, each being five townships in length from east to west and three and one-half townships from north to south, and each containing 630 square miles.

The assessed valuation of property in Hardee county at that time was

\$2,615,141, and that of DeSoto county \$2,851,347. Charlotte county had an area of 778 square miles and an assessed value of \$1,646,777. Glades county contained 736 square miles and had an assessed valuation of \$1,449,906. Highlands county contained 1,016 square miles and had an assessed valuation of \$2,056,027.

The population of the five counties was estimated as follows: Hardee, 8,755; DeSoto, 9,180; Charlotte, 5,541; Highlands, 6,210; Glades, 5,541.

Hardee county was quite a lusty youngster. There were thirteen counties in the state with a smaller area and ten with approximately the same area. There were twelve counties with less assessed valuation and two with about the same.

Hardee county was larger than any of the following counties: Baker, Bradford, Citrus, Clay, Gadsden, Hamilton, Hernando, Holmes, Jefferson, Pinellas, Seminole, Sumter and Waukulla. It was approximately the same size as the following counties: Bay, Broward, Escambia, Franklin, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Nassau, Suwannee and Washington.

Hardee county included the trucking center of old DeSoto and was one of the most prosperous and rapidly developing counties in the state. The county contained little swamp land and no prairie land, with most of the land pine timber land suitable for developing into orange and grapefruit groves, truck farms and stock-raising communities.

The towns included in the county were: Wauchula, Bowling Green, Zolfo Springs, Moffitt, Buchanan, Gardner, Fort Green, Fort Green Springs, Vandolah, Ona, Bridges, Limestone,

Lily, Castalia, Crewsville and Sweetwater.

Wauchula was named as the temporary county seat of Hardee county, Sebring the temporary county seat of Highlands, Moore Haven of Glades and Punta Gorda of Charlotte county.

The board of county commissioners of the newly formed Hardee county held the first meeting on Monday, May 16th, 1921, in the office of the Peace River Land Company, with Dr. Y. E. Wright acting as chairman. Little business was transacted except approving bonds of the different county officers.

The next meeting was held on Monday, May 23rd, and the most important business transacted then was the leasing of the second floor of the Bank of Wauchula Building to be used as county offices. This was used as county headquarters until the new courthouse was occupied in 1927.

At this meeting there was present Commissioners Y. E. Wright, S. F. Durrance, William Cliett, and D. L. Hall. All these men were appointed as county commissioners when the new county was formed.

Lee M. Hammel was county judge, G. M. Hardee clerk, John Poucher sheriff, all of Wauchula; S. A. Carlton, of Bowling Green, tax collector; Henry G. Murphy, of Zolfo Springs, tax assessor; W. R. Gramling, of Fort Green, superintendent of public instruction; J. L. Townsend, of Wauchula, supervisor of registration; and W. R. Minor, Bowling Green, S. B. Hogan, Wauchula, and H. K. Still, Crewsville, members of the county school board.

It is interesting to note that Chester

S. Dishong, of Wauchula, was named sheriff of Highlands county. However, he was not kindly received by the people in that county because he did not live in that county, and not wishing to force himself upon the people of Highlands county, he resigned and returned to Wauchula.

There were many efforts put forth to have the county seat established at Bowling Green, Wauchula and Zolfo Springs, each wanting to be selected for the county site.

An election was called for December 23, 1921, but an injunction was filed against having the election and

it was postponed one week to hear the injunction argued.

The election was held on December 30, 1921. It was a rather one-sided affair, with Wauchula getting 1,030 votes and Zolfo Springs 69. For some reason, the polls did not open at Limestone, Lily, Gardner, and Sweetwater, but the vote there was not sufficiently large to alter the results.

Thus Wauchula became the county seat of the new county. It was not until some years later that a new courthouse and jail was erected in the town and road bond issues were put through resulting in many miles of hard-surfaced roads being built into all sections of the county.

CHAPTER X

When Hardee county was formed in 1921 it was vastly different from what it was twenty years prior to that. This development, steady and substantial, reads like an empire builders' dream—and empire builders were just what some of those early settlers were. They builded well, invested wisely, boosted untiringly. And out of the thinly settled country where pine and oak and cypress trees grew and palmettoes bordered the ponds and creeks, came a county of wealth and prosperity, and a people happy and contented.

Let us trace briefly the development step by step, during those twenty years prior to the forming of Hardee county. Then we shall be more able to understand the growth of the county after it was cut off from DeSoto.

In the fall of 1903 a seedless orange was found in Albert Carlton's grove west of Wauchula which later became quite well-known as Carlton's seedless orange. The tree which bore the fruit was a seedling and of more than fifty oranges examined the first year, only two of them contained a seed, and they had only one seed each.

The fruit was of medium size, almost perfectly round, with a thin velvety skin. The pulp was of a deep yellow color and the fruit was sweet and of exquisite flavor. The discovery was first made in October, 1903, and

immediately after that the fame of this orange began to spread.

The fruit was classed as "Fancy Golden Bright," commercially, and the tree from which it came was a seventy-five year old tree in a grove of 950 others. The tree yielded fifteen boxes of fruit in 1903. Some years later the orange was sent to the Bureau of Plant Industry of the U. S. Government and was declared to be a "very fine orange and one of excellent flavor and quality."

The orange was widely distributed by a nursery and became quite well-known.

One of the biggest industries ever to come to Hardee county was that of the Wauchula Manufacturing company, which was later taken over by the Wauchula Development company. Perhaps no single industry ever resulted in bringing in as many settlers as this did, and much of the early development of the county is owed to this concern, as we shall see by a brief review of its activities.

On Monday, April 22, 1904, a meeting was held in Wauchula and at that time Messrs. Eugene Holtsinger, R. J. Hodgson, A. G. Smith, A. B. Townsend, E. F. Bostick, Harry Stansfield, Dr. J. M. Beeson, and I. C. Smith met and perfected plans for putting in a crate factory here. The following officers were elected: A. B. Town-

send, president; Eugene Holtsinger, vice-president; A. G. Smith, treasurer; I. C. Smith, secretary, and R. J. Hodgson, manager.

The mill was erected about one mile south of the town of Wauchula and operation began in September, 1904.

On March 22, 1907, a company was formed to take over the plant of the Wauchula Manufacturing Company and the land owned by Eugene Holtsinger and his associates, amounting to something like 27,000 acres.

The company put in an ice plant at once, the first ice manufactured in Wauchula being turned out early in November, 1907.

Some interesting data on the public schools of this section is given in the bi-ennial report of the state superintendent of public instruction for the years ending June 30, 1910.

There were at that time three senior high schools in the county, at Wauchula, Arcadia and Punta Gorda. These were open eight months of the year to any pupil who could enter the seventh grade. Wauchula had the largest enrollment.

There were junior high schools at Nocatee and Bowling Green. All schools in the county were open five months, and the senior high schools eight months. A number of schools had six and seven months through special tax funds.

On August 5, 1912, the Wauchula Manufacturing and Timber company was granted a franchise to furnish electric lights for Wauchula, this being the first electric light plant in the town of Wauchula and incidentally the forerunner of the modern municipal light and power plant of today.

The Wauchula Manufacturing and

Timber company mill was operated by J. L. Close as manager. It manufactured boxes, crates, etc. and operated extensively for some years, the firm having some 54,000 acres of land and timber under control. After Mr. Close's death the mill was operated by J. A. Caldwell and Geo. S. Williams.

Later, the Wauchula Development company was organized with the principal stockholders of the Wauchula Manufacturing and Timber company, with the addition of W. O. Gandy, organizer. This was in 1911. The company began preparations, surveys and experiments at once and immediately thereafter put on an extensive advertising campaign. Land sales began the latter part of 1912 and the company sold some 20,000 acres of land in 1912, 1913 and 1914.

The company spent thousands of dollars in advertising and in 1913 and 1914 started the town of Vandolah, several miles directly west of Wauchula, on the Charlotte Harbor and Northern Railroad, which came through that section in 1912. The railroad was built through the western part of the county, touching Fort Green, Fort Green Springs, Vandolah, Ona, Limestone, then into Arcadia, where it connected with the Atlantic Coast Line railroad. The road extended to Bradley Junction and from there into Plant City, serving the phosphate region between Fort Green and Plant City. This road is in operation today and is a valuable asset to Hardee county. It is a branch of the Seaboard Air Line railway.

The Wauchula Manufacturing and Timber company had several short railroads extending both east and west

from Wauchula which were used to haul timber to the mill. Later these were abandoned.

On February 6, 1917, the Wauchula Development company took over the Wauchula Manufacturing and Timber company and immediately after this the mill and all other properties of the Wauchula Manufacturing and Timber companies were operated by the Wauchula Development company until the mill was destroyed by fire on September 18, 1924. The mill had previously been destroyed by fire, in 1914, but was rebuilt on a larger scale.

From February 6, 1917, the company was under the control of J. W. Wright, of Dallas, Texas, who died early in 1929. In addition to manufacturing crates, boxes, baskets, etc. the company also manufactured lumber and shipped millions of feet to the government during the war to be used in the construction of camps, etc. The company also shipped crossties.

The plant was greatly enlarged and at one time the volume of business amounted to \$1,200,000 a year. It is estimated that 1,000 settlers were brought to this county by this concern alone, through its extensive advertising campaign. Sales extended to South America, Central America, South Africa, Europe, and throughout the United States.

The company is now inactive and non-operative, though it still controls some 25,000 acres of land in the county. H. B. Rainey has been vice-president and general manager since 1915.

Getting back to the development of roads and bridges in this part of the county, we find that between November 1915 and March 1916, twenty-five new concrete bridges were erected in the Wauchula district of the county,

which comprised commissioner district number one. These bridges were erected at a cost of approximately \$26,000, out of a bond issue of \$30,000 voted for that purpose.

This district included Bowling Green, Fort Green, Ona, Wauchula, and several other communities and bridges were built as follows:

Bridges number 18 and 19 were built east of Wauchula on the road leading to Peace River.

Two bridges on the Ona road just west of Wauchula, (the one just west of town having been replaced by a larger bridge some years ago).

Bridge number 10 crosses Troublesome Creek halfway between Wauchula and Ona.

About half a mile west of Ona bridge number 11 crosses Ona creek.

Bridge number 18 crosses Horse creek on the Bradenton road west of Ona.

Bridge number 15 is at Payne's creek and has a sixty foot span and a grand arch.

Little Payne's creek is spanned by the longest of the bridges, being 107 feet long. This is bridge number 13.

On a spur road running west from the Wauchula and Bowling Green highway two bridges were built, these being numbers 20 and 21.

Hog branch bridge is number 12 while on the Dixie Highway between Wauchula and Zolfo Springs there are three bridges, numbers 4, 5 and 6.

On the road running south from the convict camp west of Wauchula are two other bridges, these being numbers 8 and 9.

Many of these bridges stand today and one will find upon them a bronze tablet bearing the names of the coun-

ty commissioners, the bridge construction company, and those connected with the work. The arched spans permit a large volume of water to pass under the bridge and in the many years since the bridges were built they have proven very useful as well as substantial. Many roads have more recently been built in the sections these bridges serve, but in many

instances the bridges remain as they were, still as good as the day they were opened to traffic. In some cases the bridges have been replaced by larger and wider structures, but on lesser traveled roads the bridges built in 1916 are still wide enough to accommodate traffic.

L. W. Whitehurst was county commissioner in this district at the time these bridges were built.

CHAPTER XI

A history of Hardee county would not be complete without at least a brief sketch of the activities, not only of those able to bear arms, but also of the men and women who gave so freely of their time and money during the trouble with Mexico in 1916 and especially in the stirring days of 1917 and 1918, when practically the entire world was engaged in conflict.

When the first call for troops to go to the Mexican border was sent out in the spring of 1916, the young men of this section responded nobly.

Even before the World War began on August 4, 1914, a company was organized in Wauchula. Of course, no one foresees the events of the next few years, but they saw the need of preparedness.

Accordingly, on Monday night, July 6, 1914, the Wauchula Military company of the National Guards of Florida was mustered in. Captain V. B. Callians, of Plant City, now adjutant of Florida, and Captain A. E. Freeman, of Fort Green, were the officers in charge.

The following is the muster roll:

Captain, J. F. Stewart, First Lieutenant M. B. Deeson, Second Lieutenant W. L. Pace, A. Bainbridge, R. D. Boston, H. L. Bracey, J. O. Bethea, W. A. Bateman, J. B. Bird, J. M. Butler, F. Chambless, G. Chambless, H. P. Chancey, E. J. Chadwick, E. B. Ches-

ney, D. A. Campbell, B. Collier, C. S. Dishong, W. L. Draughon, J. H. Dunn, H. Driggers, H. Edwards, H. L. Quarteman, C. L. Gibbs, S. H. Giesy, S. M. Grainger, R. Ham, W. H. Harlan, C. M. Hendry, R. W. Hartman, R. F. Houston, J. C. Hollis, W. C. Hogan, C. O. Aspinwall, W. O. Edmondson, W. D. Sinquefield, P. M. Jenkins, R. Langston, D. J. Long, H. C. Maddox, C. Morris, C. A. Mercer, L. E. McLeod, P. C. Niergarth, C. C. Poole, C. A. Ross, H. W. Shaver, H. W. Schaefer, J. M. Simmons, J. S. Simmons, R. L. Shaw, H. L. Smith, C. C. Smith, J. B. Thomas, C. M. Turman, S. T. Turton, J. Walsh, M. Webb, J. K. Williams, C. Webb, L. L. Warren, G. B. Langford, W. D. Bragdon, W. M. Altman, A. D. Nedine, F. Southerland, J. F. Hurst.

Fifteen men from Zolfo Springs joined the company, this making the sixty-three, the number necessary to make a full company.

The company later became known as the Wauchula Rifles, and on Wednesday evening, June 21, 1916, the company left for Black Point, near Jacksonville. From there it was transferred to Laredo, Texas, on account of trouble with Mexico.

The call for state troops was received on Monday, June 19, 1916 and Wauchula being the home of Col. A. H. Blanding, colonel of the Second Regiment, Wauchula was made head-

quarters for the mobilization of the regiment.

On the first call for troops, Col. Blanding, Dr. H. E. Cline, who went as assistant surgeon and held the rank of First Lieutenant, and sixty-eight men volunteered.

The complete roster of the company leaving Wauchula on Wednesday, June 21, is as follows:

Captain C. S. Dishong; First Lieutenant Samuel H. Giesy; Second Lieutenant W. M. Altman; First Sergeant W. L. Draughon; Quartermaster Sergeant J. S. Simmons; Sergeants J. B. Bird, R. F. Houston, E. A. Chandler; Corporals D. J. Long, H. W. Shaver, M. C. Bryan, S. M. Grainger, J. W. Farr, Frank Chambless; Artisan E. E. Lewis.

Privates, John Ansley, John Barker, Joe Chambless, N. B. Connor, James Driggers, B. M. Farr, William H. Harlan, Sam Hines, Joe Keene, S. B. McCall, C. S. Morris, Jock O'Bryant, Harry Pillan, C. Thomas, Earl Sams, A. S. Maddox, E. V. Sherman, E. B. Frazier, R. A. Clark, A. J. Randall, R. W. Simms, C. W. Quigley, T. L. Boatwright, John Buchanan, J. O. Bethea, T. Collier, W. D. Collins, Jack Dunn, L. Futral, J. R. Hines, J. E. Hay, Jess Lambert, L. E. McLeod, C. L. Nettles, W. P. Flyler, Jim Simmons, Lex L. Warren, C. Whidden, S. P. Cox, E. M. Pierce, D. M. Ayres, K. R. Harries, L. D. Lawhon, J. R. Orr, C. W. Caldwell, Dewey Montgomery, M. C. Whitehurst, R. V. Hightower, and Ralph Bloodworth.

The following men joined the company enroute to Jacksonville: Sergeant C. A. Barker, Jess Elmore, Latimer C. Farr, Roy Evers, S. B. Turton, and T. Hoyt Carlton.

Musicians were: E. Southerland and P. Cassidy. Cooks were A. T. Parks and J. E. Cox.

The company left Laredo, Texas on Friday morning, March 9, 1917, and came back to Black Point. The men arrived in Wauchula on Sunday morning, March 18, 1917, and in less than three weeks the United States declared war with Germany, on April 6, 1917.

Company "F" was Federalized on Sunday, August 5, 1917 and became a part of the U. S. Army. It was Company "F" of the 124th Infantry of the 31st Division, known as the Dixie Division and made up of troops from Florida, Georgia and Alabama.

This company was encamped at Camp Wheeler, near Macon, Ga. Here the privates were transferred to France while the officers remained in Camp Wheeler to train others. Later they were given a third detachment of men to train and with this body were sent to France.

On Wednesday, September 19, 1917, forty-seven DeSoto county boys left Wauchula for Camp Jackson, Columbia, S. C., where they entered the service. Those leaving on that date were: from Wauchula: W. E. Bratcher, Rupert L. Carlton, Murray C. Whitehurst, J. G. Hill, Arthur T. Mathis; from Zolfo Springs, Samuel D. Carlton, Thad C. Taylor, T. J. Scarborough, Lonnie W. Henderson; from Bowling Green, Wayman H. Howard, Wayne Ragan, James R. Hicks, George F. Hays, J. Albert Hays; from Ona, Clovis Mathiew, Joseph B. Clark; Lily, Delos Albritton; Brownville, Thomas A. Rowell; Fort Green, Reuben Chaney; Gardner, John Thomas Williams.

Too much praise cannot be given those brave boys who so gallantly

fought on the battlefields of France, in the Argonne Forest, in Bellau Woods, and at Chateau-Thierry. When the Florida soldiers reached France they were widely scattered and saw action at many places along the front.

Several of them lost their lives in action, while others died of wounds or disease.

Through the Herger Williams Post No. 2 of the American Legion, we are able to give a nearly complete roster of those from this section who saw service. Perhaps there have been one or two names overlooked, but this is as near an accurate record as can be had.

Those who saw service in the World War either in France, American training camps, or in schools, include: from Wauchula; Paul Boree, F. W. Brown, Ralph Bloodworth, Ceylon R. Bostick, John B. Bird, C. A. Barker, Finis Crews, Horace Crews, W. E. Cochran, A. F. Close, F. A. Chambless, T. Hoyt Carlton, W. P. Davis, James A. Ensley, Jerald W. Farr, Latimer C. Farr, B. M. Farr, Charles D. Frazier, Rupert Carlton, W. W. Gillette, Dr. J. E. Garner, George Gillette, Don Hadsell, W. I. Hampton, Max Hardee, Carl Hanna, W. H. Harlan, Dr. M. C. Kayton, Jess Lambert, DuPont Long, Roy W. Lamb, Gordon B. Langford, Howard A. McRae, F. M. Morris, H. C. Mathis, Berkley J. Norris, W. E. Pierce, W. H. Ratliff, John B. Rooney, Grady H. Revell, J. M. Richardson, Frank H. Simmons, Leon F. Singletary, Al. G. Smith, Scott G. Smith, W. J. See, W. A. Spivey, H. A. Yetter, E. K. Walker, Jr., Fred Whidden, Herger Williams, Lester Williams, Leslie Wadsworth, C. M. Hendry, Bishop M. Sauls, J. M. Simmons, C. S. Dishong, Joe Williams, W. M. Griffin, W. D. Wilson, Earl D.

Farr, M. R. Haister, W. A. Bateman, Ord Hall, Dale Hall, C. C. Skipper, Murray Green, H. C. Maddox, J. M. McRae, M. L. Benton, Guy Chambless, R. C. Boney, George Duncan, Tom Collier, Clarence Carlton, T. H. Williams, Lillington Tew, H. J. Bennett, Sam Hines, Sam F. Bernard, M. C. Whitehurst, Gilbert McGeehee, Herman C. Schenck, R. W. Redding, Mal Altman, W. M. Moore, O'Dell McGuire, Hiram McCrory, Grady Burch, Willie Mitchell, D. L. Southerland, Houston Hogan and Joe Herring.

From Bowling Green: Lynn Boatwright, Frank H. Bryant, James K. Cox, Mitchell Durrance, Wayman H. Howard, Robert M. Keene, Joe Keene, E. F. Moseley, George Rosin, Ollie Roberts, Clyde T. Ratliff, J. D. Jackson, George P. Daurelle, Clifford Blackburn, Alfred Maddox Bryan and J. R. Orr.

From Zolfo Springs: L. A. Barwick, George R. Barwick, W. J. Flowers.

Fred Gilbert, of Fort Green Springs; and Joseph P. Clark, of Gardner.

Several of the above named lost their lives in the service. Herger Williams and J. L. Orr were killed at Chateau-Thierry in September, 1917; Alfred Maddox Bryan died in France; Joe Herring was killed in battle; Grady Burch died and was buried at sea; and Willie Mitchell died at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and was buried at Wauchula.

The body of Herger Williams was returned home and buried at Oak Grove, while Alfred Maddox Bryan was buried at Orlando, Florida.

In addition to offering their sons and brothers into the service of their country, the people of this section gave

liberally to the nation's cause by buying Liberty Bonds and in other ways. In one drive in which this county's quota was five thousand dollars, more than six thousand was raised. In other drives of this kind they did equally as well. The people of Wauchohula subscribed more than two hundred per cent of their quota.

When the war ended on November 11, 1918, dozens of boys from this immediate vicinity were doing their bit in France, while others were in training camps awaiting orders to go.

Most of them did not reach their homes until the spring of 1919, several months after the war ended.

One of those who received perhaps more honors than any soldier from South Florida was George P. Daurelle, of Bowling Green.

Mr. Daurelle was awarded three medals, the presentation being made on Friday, August 8, 1919, when a special ceremony was held at Bowling Green.

One medal was the French Croix de Guerre, conferred by the French government for bravery on the fields of France.

Another was a medal for distinguished service in Mexico in 1916, and the third was a good conduct medal from the United States. He also received a citation from the French government for great heroism.

Before the presentation, which was made by Captain Colocresses, and Sergeants Wheeler and Long, Mr. Daurelle already had four decorations, a Mexican campaign bar, a Haitian campaign bar, a Haitian medal and a sharpshooter's badge.

CHAPTER XII

After the World War, development of this section was resumed on a bigger and steadier scale than ever before. Roads were built, new settlers came, land was cleared, homes erected, and things generally became more prosperous.

The more than one hundred service men who returned to their homes from the war in 1919 furnished an added impetus and for the next five or six years the county was destined to enjoy a most remarkable growth.

In the spring of 1919 the Wauchula truckers marketed the biggest crop of vegetables they had yet sent to market. From twelve to twenty-seven carloads of vegetables were shipped daily during the rush of the season and approximately one million dollars was returned to growers as a result of the vegetable crop alone.

In addition to this, Wauchula shipped out over 125,000 boxes of oranges and grapefruit, which was estimated to have brought growers \$2.50 net on the trees, making more than \$300,000 realized from citrus fruits.

Over three hundred carloads of vegetables were shipped out that year, and from \$1.50 to \$6.50 a crate was paid growers for cucumbers, this being one of the main crops. Tomatoes, watermelons and other crops

were shipped and each brought good prices.

It was by far the most successful season the Wauchula section had ever experienced and, while most of the crop in this section was marketed at Wauchula, some shipments were also made from Bowling Green, Zolfo Springs, and other points.

In addition to the citrus and vegetables marketed, that season saw a large number of cattle sold, as the county still had free range and contained some of the largest herds of cattle in Florida. The breeding of fine cattle had not been undertaken, yet the range cattle brought in a neat sum each year.

Hog raising was also indulged in by many and the income from this meant a great deal to the community and this part of the county.

Other industries included turpentine and lumber manufacturing.

In July, 1919, the State Road Department appropriated the sum of \$125,000 for the construction of State Road No. 2 between Wauchula and Bowling Green. This was part of the Dixie Highway and was and still is one of the important links in the highway which stretches from Fort Myers north to the Georgia line, where it then leads to Macon and Atlanta.

Not only did this road serve to bring

the towns of Wauchula and Bowling Green closer together, but it was an important artery of travel.

The road was first built of brick, and it was nine feet wide. After some use, it became very rough in spots and travel over it was disagreeable until some years later when it was widened and rebuilt into the fine highway it is today.

After county division on April 21, 1921, when this part of DeSoto county became Hardee, more settlers came and growth of this section seemed to begin anew. Roads were built, homes, churches and schools were built, clubs and societies organized, and the county progressed.

The Wauchula section had become quite well known throughout the state through a constant stream of publicity. The larger papers throughout the state frequently carried news stories about this section and what it was doing in the way of producing winter vegetables, citrus fruit, and about its growth and prosperity.

Newspapers in the county, at Wauchula and Zolfo Springs, did much to help spread the gospel of Hardee county and it was through the efforts of those whose business it was to operate these papers that the newly-formed county had already been quite well known.

Representatives of some of the larger papers in the state visited the county and sent stories about it to their papers. These stories were glowing accounts of how farmers here were reaping rich harvests in the Peace River Valley section, where a "combination soil" enabled them to produce citrus fruits and winter vegetables on the same land.

This publicity, both by local papers

and other papers and magazines, had a great deal to do with making this section become one of the best known in Florida and throughout the country.

The Wauchula Manufacturing and Timber Company, the Wauchula Development Company, and other large and small companies doing business in this section also sent out much publicity matter, while local citizens told relatives and friends in other states of the splendid section they had found town in South Florida.

One of the biggest events immediately after county division was the meeting of the Florida State Swine Growers Association, held in Wauchula on Wednesday and Thursday, July 20 and 21, 1921. Thousands of visitors from all over the state attended, including Governor Cary A. Hardee, after whom the new county had been named.

Governor Hardee spoke at the meeting on Thursday. Other events included fish fry, barbecue dinner, speaking and a big hog sale which attracted many buyers and saw some fine stock change hands.

The first election of county officers was held on November 7, 1922, at the time of the general election and the following officers were elected to succeed those appointed when the county was formed in 1921:

Senator, E. J. Etheredge; representative, S. D. Williams; county judge, Frank E. Connor; sheriff, Chester S. Dishong; clerk, circuit court, S. W. Conroy; county superintendent of public instruction, J. B. Rooney; tax assessor, John C. McEwen; tax collector, Lloyd J. Carlton; registration officer, Mrs. E. L. Register.

The county commissioners were:

William Cliett, district 1; W. B. Beeson, district 2; J. Ed Raulerson, district 3; D. L. Hall, district 4, and S. F. Durrance, district 5.

Members of the school board were: W. R. Minor, in district 1; S. B. Hogan, in district 2, and H. K. Still in district 3.

The newly elected officers took office on Monday, November 27, 1922.

After repeated delays, the board of county commissioners held a good roads bond election on Tuesday, December 19, 1922. The election was for one million dollars' worth of bonds to construct approximately ninety-five miles of roads throughout the county. The election lost by approximately two to one, the vote being: for bonds, 611; against bonds, 1,049.

One year after the first bond election for a county-wide system of hard roads was held, a second election took place. This was held on Tuesday, December 18, 1923, and resulted in the issue carrying by about two to one. The vote was 435 for bonds and 229 against.

The bonds voted amounted to \$850,000 and this, with the amount spent about the same time by the State Road Department on State Road No. 2, totaled well over one million dollars, nearer a million and a quarter.

At the time the election was held, the State Road Department was rebuilding the Dixie Highway (No. 2) from Bowling Green on the north to the county line on the south.

In the fourteen voting precincts of the county, nine of them gave a majority for the bonds, four of them gave a majority against bonds, and one gave a tie vote. Bowling Green, Fort Green, Sweetwater and Gardner gave a majority against the bonds,

while the four precincts in Wauchula and those at Popash, Zolfo Springs, Ona, Limestone and Lily gave majorities in favor of the bonds. At Lake Branch, five votes were cast for bonds and five against them.

The vote was much smaller than had been expected, because only freeholders were allowed to vote, many had not paid their poll taxes, some had not paid their real estate taxes, and others took no interest in the matter.

The roads included in this bond issue are outlined below, in the excerpts taken from the resolution under which the bond issue was submitted to the public:

Road number 1, running from Ona, easterly through Wauchula and to the Highlands county line, to be built nine feet wide to road leading to W. J. Williams, J. G. Durrance and J. L. Sauls; fifteen feet wide from there to a point eleven miles east of Peace river, and nine feet wide from there to the Highlands county line, to cost \$330,000.

Road number 2, from Oak street in the city of Wauchula, northerly and easterly for a distance of two miles; costing \$18,000.

Road number 3, from a point two miles east of Bowling Green, through Bowling Green and in a westerly direction to Fort Green, costing \$99,000.

Road number 4, from Ab W. Carlton's corner running in a westerly direction for a distance of two miles; costing \$18,000.

Road number 5, from intersection of W. J. Williams, J. G. Durrance and J. L. Sauls corner with Wauchula-Ona road in a southerly direction for a distance of two miles; costing \$18,000.

Road number 6, from Ona station

on the C. H. & N. railway to Lily by way of Limestone, a distance of twelve and three-fourths miles; costing \$110,500.

Road number 7, from Zolfo Springs, easterly towards Crewsville; costing \$73,000.

Road number 8, beginning at the Dixie Highway at Moffitt and running easterly toward Friendship; costing \$9,000.

Road number 9, from the Dixie Highway at Buchanan and running easterly to the Sweetwater settlement, approximately four miles; costing \$36,000.

Road number 10, from the Dixie Highway at Gardner and running easterly a distance of three miles; costing \$27,000.

Road number 12, from the top of the hill just east of Peace river on the Wauchula-Avon Park road and running in a southeasterly direction to the Zolfo Springs-Avon Park road near the Popash school; costing \$22,500.

Road number 13, beginning one-fourth mile north of brick pavement on road between Wauchula and Hog Branch and running westerly one mile and then northerly one mile; costing \$18,000.

Road number 14, beginning at Peace river bridge on Dixie Highway between Wauchula and Zolfo Springs and running westerly on the Zolfo Springs-Ona road two miles; costing \$17,000.

Road number 15, beginning at Fort Green Springs and running easterly toward Wauchula a distance of three miles; costing \$27,000.

Road number 16, beginning at Ona and running westerly to Manatee county line; costing \$27,000.

The bond issue meant a great deal to the county, as it included roads extending into all sections of the county and serving all communities. Most of the roads outlined above were built of asphalt, with lime rock base. Road number 16 and one or two others were of sand-clay construction.

CHAPTER XIII

The \$850,000 bond issue voted for good roads in Hardee county was sold on Monday, February 11, 1924, to Breed-Elliott & Harrison, J. C. Mayer & Company, and Blanchet Thornberg and Vandersall at a premium. The price paid was \$103.55 or \$880,175 for the total issue. There were seven bids received.

Work on the ninety-five miles of good roads began on Thursday, April 10, 1924, when W. B. Beeson, chairman of the board of county commissioners, threw the first shovelful of dirt on the Wauchula-Avon Park road just west of Peace river. This road was widened from a nine-foot brick road to an eighteen-foot road.

The contract was awarded to the William P. McDonald Construction Company, of Lakeland.

The work of building Hardee county's road system was not completed until 1928, after a supplementary bond issue of \$120,000 was put through on May 1, 1925.

A bond issue of \$225,000 in Road and Bridge District No. 2 was passed on June 1, 1925, to build the Wauchula-Parrish highway, one of the most important roads in the splendid highway system.

On November 2, 1925, two supplemental issues were put through, consisting of \$40,000, and on May 1, 1927,

a final road bond issue of \$50,000 was put through.

The various road bond issues were supplemented by issues in the several districts and when the highway system was finally completed in 1927, Hardee county contained more than one hundred and fifty miles of hard-surfaced roads and over three hundred miles of graded roads serving every section of the county.

Two important road projects not mentioned in the above building program include the county line highway beginning just north of Bowling Green and extending in an easterly direction along the Hardee-Polk county line. This road is four miles long and serves a rich agricultural section. The highway extending east from Zolfo Springs was another. It is about fourteen miles in length and reaches to the Highlands county line on the east, just beyond Charley Apopka creek. This is also a splendid hard-surfaced highway and serves a rich farming area.

The State Road Department, in 1927, completed work of building the Dixie Highway between Zolfo Springs and Gardner. This road runs along the west side of the Atlantic Coast Line railroad instead of along the east side, as the old road did.

The road was also improved between

Zolfo Springs and Bowling Green, and numerous bridges were put in along the route through Hardee county, so that this became one of the best roads in the county.

Innumerable graded roads are to be found in all parts of the county, and every community is served either by a splendid paved highway or a good graded road. The county has a force of convicts, and these are kept at work on the roads of the county, thus insuring safe and convenient passage at all times.

At the election held on Tuesday, June 3, 1924, the following officers were chosen in Hardee county:

For state senator, E. J. Etheredge; for representative, Joseph Crews.

For county judge, Frank E. Connor; for sheriff, C. S. Dishong; for county superintendent, John B. Rooney; for tax assessor, John C. McEwen; for tax collector, Lloyd J. Carlton. Mr. Connor declined to serve as judge and H. D. Garrison was named for that office.

For county commissioners: William Cliett, district one; W. B. Beeson, district two; J. Ed Raulerson, district three; D. L. Hall, district four; S. F. Durrance, district five.

Members of the school board were S. B. Hogan, Wm. Timmerman, and E. R. Shackelford.

On the night of Wednesday, September 17, 1924, fire completely destroyed the Wauchula crate mill, one of the largest and most important concerns in the county.

The fire started shortly after eight o'clock and spread so rapidly that in a few minutes it covered the more than four hundred and fifty feet of buildings and every effort to check the flames was unavailing.

That part destroyed consisted of the crate mill, saw mill and lumber yard, covering buildings four hundred and fifty feet long by eighty feet wide. The ice plant, ware rooms, machine shop, supply house, office, employees' houses and commissary were saved. More than a million feet of lumber was destroyed by the flames.

The mill was in operation about twelve years, replacing a smaller mill built along about 1904. The plant was one of the largest in the South and possibly the largest in Florida. It employed from three to four hundred people during the rush season and the payroll amounted to approximately ten thousand dollars every two weeks. It was one of the greatest industries thus far established in the county and the loss was keenly felt.

The plant was owned by the Wauchula Development Company. The late J. W. Wright, of Dallas, Texas, was president, and Homa B. Rainey, of Wauchula, general manager. J. A. McInnis, of Wauchula, was active plant manager.

There was some talk of rebuilding the mill, but this was never done.

On October 3, 1924, the county commissioners let the contract for construction of the county jail to W. C. Robertson, of Bartow, for the sum of \$36,510.

The jail, designed by H. G. Little, Wauchula architect, was erected on the east side of the lot for which the sum of \$50,000 in bonds was voted on July 2, 1923, to purchase the lot and build the jail.

The new jail, two stories and of reinforced concrete construction throughout, blended with the new courthouse which was to be erected later. The jail measures 37 by 52 feet

and has a capacity for forty prisoners. It is trimmed with brick and stone and is roomy, convenient and substantial. It is said to be one of the most modern and complete jails in the South.

Meanwhile, the county was enjoying its share of the real estate boom. New subdivisions were being put on the market almost weekly and hundreds of people were coming to make their homes here. Cities and towns enjoyed unprecedented growth and property changed hands rapidly.

The beginning of the real estate boom as far as Hardee county is concerned, may be traced to the summer of 1924, when Harry E. Prettyman, developer, located here. It must be said in fairness to Mr. Prettyman that, had the people followed his advice, they would have enjoyed a greater prosperity from the boom. He urged that the price of real estate and other property be kept within reason and that all offered for sale be at a nominal figure.

But the general public could not see things that way. When a man bought a piece of property, he immediately offered it for sale at a good profit, a larger profit, in fact, than he should have expected. If the property finally was sold at the high price asked, often it reverted back to the original owner. In case it didn't, the buyer was not entirely satisfied.

If a man bought property for ten thousand, the first time he offered it for sale, the price would be at least fifteen thousand, perhaps twenty. Lots that in Wauchula twenty years previous had sold for four and five dollars each, brought as high as one thousand dollars a front foot during the boom days of 1924 and 1925.

Mr. Prettyman was followed by Har-

ry Leaberry, and other realtors and land agents who offered anything they could list at prices far above what anyone should have been expected to pay.

However, the land boom continued until well along in 1927, when the real estate men, most of whom had come in from the north only a few months before, silently closed their offices and stole away, leaving their land unsold and perhaps the taxes unpaid.

The several realtors who had located here many years before, including the Wauchula Development Company, R. O. Evans, F. A. Tanner, J. G. Anderson, and others, continued in business as usual, and today finds them still offering good land for sale at reasonable prices.

Just what the boom cost Hardee county and all Florida will never be known. Thousands who came here expecting to get rich quick soon found their dreams shattered. Others who came expecting to invest, soon discovered that there were more doing the same thing, and plenty of people on the ground to offer them investments at figures far beyond reason.

It must be said, however, that the native Floridan even the man who had located here before the boom and some who came during the boom, dealt fairly and squarely with the buying public. Most of the quick-trading was done by those who drifted in during 1924 and 1925, looking for someone to make a living on. And they found them.

Many who came during the boom remained to make their home and to work and help build a greater and more prosperous Florida.

The real estate boom did not affect Hardee county to the extent it did

some others, because this is primarily a farming section, where fruit and vegetable growing has been carried on for more than twenty-five years. Though some quit farming during the boom, expecting to make a living easier by other means, the agricultural side was perhaps looked after better then than at any time before or since. An agricultural agent was employed to assist farmers, and his work was beneficial and far-reaching. J. A. Shealy was the county agent.

The first Hardee county fair was held on January 12th to 16th, 1925, opening on Tuesday and closing Saturday night. A. H. Wale was manager, and the exhibits would have done credit to a county many times the size of Hardee.

The second fair, on a more elaborate scale than the first, opened on Tuesday, January 19, 1926, and closed Saturday night, January 23rd. W. B. Beeson, chairman of the board of county commissioners, with J. A. Shealy, county agent, managed this fair.

The third fair opened on Tuesday, January 4, 1927 and ran until Saturday night, January 8th. William Cliett, county commissioner in the Bowling Green district, managed this fair, assisted by J. A. Shealy, county agent, and J. Harold Saxon, who was secre-

tary of the Hardee county chamber of commerce.

On Tuesday June 8, 1926, the Democratic primary election was held in the county, resulting in the election of the following county officials.

State senator, E. J. Etheredge; representative, Joseph Crews.

County commissioners: William Cliett, W. B. Beeson, R. J. Davis, D. L. Hall and S. F. Durrance.

Members of the school board: Wm. Timmerman, S. B. Hogan and C. D. Ivey.

On Tuesday morning, April 27, 1926, the new high school building in Wauchula, which later became the county high school was occupied for the first time. This building, erected at the corner of Bay street and the Dixie Highway, occupied the front half of a block and was an imposing structure of faced brick, trimmed with stone. It was a two-story, practically fire-proof building, and when designed by H. G. Little, Wauchula architect, and built by Paber Construction Company, of Avon Park, was amply large to care for the more than three hundred children enrolled in the Wauchula high school. Later, when it was decided to make this the county high school, the building became crowded, more than four hundred children being taught there.

CHAPTER XIV

The new Hardee county courthouse, for which contract was let on Tuesday, April 6, 1926, to the Robertson Construction Company, of Bartow, was designed by H. G. Little and William Bradford, Wauchula architects.

The building, erected on the lot between Ninth and Tenth avenues and between Main and Orange streets, cost \$132,400 and is one of remarkable simplicity and architectural beauty.

The courthouse was completed in the spring of 1927 and was first occupied on June 1st of that year, when the county offices were moved from the temporary quarters on Main street to the new courthouse.

The massive stone steps lead directly to the second or main floor. Heavy bronze doors, each weighing one thousand pounds, lead into the building. On the left is a directory which bears the names of all county officials and the number of their rooms.

On the right of the lobby is the office of Tax Collector. This consists of a large public room, a private office and a vault and storage closet.

The Tax Assessor's office is next to that of Tax Collector. This also has a public room and a private office, with a vault and storage closet also.

Entering from the main hall are the county commissioners' rooms, having both private and public space. These

are connected with the county clerk's redemption department in charge of a deputy clerk. The county clerk's office occupies the entire east half of the second floor and has ample public space. It contains a vault 16 by 32 feet for the safety of public records. Each office on the main floor is equipped with a lavatory.

On the main floor or basement is a large room on the northwest corner set aside for a museum. Though this has never been used except as a store room, it is anticipated that at some future date it will be used for a county museum and articles of historic value will be stored therein.

Offices for a county agent, county engineer and county registration officer adjoin the museum room.

The county judge's office is on the right of the east entrance to the building on the ground floor. It has ample public and private space as well as a detention room for prisoners. Barred windows provide for the safe keeping of prisoners while being detained here. A vault and storage room is also provided.

The sheriff's office is opposite that of the county judge, and occupies the southwest corner of the building. This office has public space and a private office, as well as vault and storage closet. A steel stairway leads from

the sheriff's office on the ground floor directly to the courtroom on the third floor and is absolutely safe as regards carrying a prisoner from the sheriff's office to the courtroom.

Public toilets for both sexes, a ladies' rest room, a janitor's room and a storage closet are located on this floor.

Going up the main stairway from the main floor to the top floor, one comes first to the circuit court room, on the right of the stairway. This room has a seating capacity of 226 besides the judge's bench and jury boxes.

The judge's bench was carved out of native cypress by Mr. Grant Mumford and has been pronounced very artistic.

Back of the courtroom are two jury rooms, each with toilets and lavatories. The courtroom has doors leading into every other room in the court suite. Among the other rooms are three detention rooms and a conference room for prisoners and their attorneys.

Private offices for the circuit judge and his clerk, with toilets and closets, are also included. The grand jury room seats eighteen and has a large vault, a toilet and lavatory.

Quarters for the County Board of Public Instruction, include two large rooms on this floor. A vault and ample closet space is provided.

Toilets for both sexes are on this floor.

In front of the building, on the spacious grounds which have been immaculately kept, is a fountain surmounted by a large eagle whose outstretched wings measure forty-eight inches. The fountain is of caen stone and the base of green tile. On the

east side of the fountain a flagpole rises sixty-six feet into the air, while a bandstand is on the west side, and on a line just back of the courthouse proper. The bandstand is approximately opposite the county jail, with the courthouse between the two.

On the northeast corner of the building is a bronze tablet, bearing the names of the county commissioners, the architect and the contractor.

The names appearing on this tablet are: Commissioners, W. B. Beeson, chairman; William Cliett, S. F. Durrance, Daniel L. Hall, J. Ed Raulerson; Architect, H. G. Little; William Bradford, associate; Contractor, Robertson Construction Company.

Grass, flowers and shrubbery have been planted on the lawn and the spacious grounds are always well-kept. The building and grounds is a beautiful and lasting structure, one that is the pride of the entire county.

On Tuesday, May 17, 1927, the county commissioners passed a \$55,000 bond issue to complete the new courthouse and the Wauchula-Parrish highway.

One of the hottest political campaigns the county ever went through took place on Tuesday June 5, 1928. In that election, Doyle E. Carlton, a native of this county, was elected to the high office of Governor of Florida. He defeated his nearest opponent by about ten thousand votes. There were five in the race.

In the county election, the races for county judge, sheriff and county superintendent of public instruction were particularly close.

W. J. Barker, of Sebring, was re-elected circuit judge, and L. Grady Burton, of Wauchula, was elected prosecuting attorney.

W. D. Bell, of Arcadia, was elected senator for this district and V. W. Surrency, of Bowling Green, named representative.

F. G. Janes, Jr., won in a field of four for county judge; C. S. Dishong was re-elected sheriff; John C. McEwen, tax assessor; Lloyd J. Carlton, tax collector; S. W. Conroy, clerk of the circuit court; John B. Rooney county superintendent of public instruction, and Mrs. E. L. Rogers, county registration officer.

The following commissioners were elected: E. C. Stenstrom, of Wauchula, chairman; G. N. Albritton, of Bowling Green; S. F. Durrance, of Popash; R. J. Davis, of Limestone, and W. C. King, of Zolfo Springs.

Members of the school board were named as follows: R. B. Downing, chairman, of Wauchula; I. G. Royall, of Bowling Green, and Edward Douglas, of Gardner.

CHAPTER XV

On Sunday, September 16, 1928, a hurricane which had just struck Porto Rico and left several hundred dead in its wake, crossed into Florida, striking the east coast at Lake Worth, Palm Beach, Delray and Fort Lauderdale. It then crossed into the vicinity of Lake Okeechobee, wrecking death and destruction along the lowlands east of the lake. Then it turned northward, striking Okeechobee City, and followed the Ridge section, passing out of the state near Jacksonville. Later, the storm caused much damage in Georgia and the Carolinas before finally passing out to sea.

In Florida, something like 2,000 people were killed and several thousand left homeless. However, the people responded as soon as calls were sent out and thousands of dollars poured into the stricken area for relief purposes. Detachments of National Guardsmen and American Legionnaires, Red Cross workers and others went into the storm-stricken area and helped bury the dead and care for the survivors.

The edge of the storm struck Hardee county and caused a considerable loss of fruit and produce, but no lives were lost. Hardee county people responded nobly to calls for help and more than four carloads of clothing and supplies were sent into the storm area. In addition, many young men

donated their services and helped care for the injured and bury the dead. The citizens of Hardee county raised the sum of \$1,112.62 for storm relief and this was sent to headquarters immediately. All sections of the county raised funds.

In the general election of November 6, 1928, Doyle E. Carlton was elected governor of Florida over his Republican opponent, W. J. Howey.

Hardee county, home county of Mr. Carlton, gave Howey a majority of 129 votes, the vote being: Carlton, 1,440; Howey, 1,569.

Along with the anti-Smith feeling which swept the county all Republican candidates received a majority of Hardee county's votes. The county officers, however, who were nominated in the Democratic primary of June 5th, had no Republican opposition and therefore went into office without a contest.

The wave of anti-Smith feeling, together with numerous northern settlers who had been Republicans before coming to a normally Democratic county and who went back into the Republican fold in the 1928 election, were sufficient to enable the Republican party to poll a majority of votes in Hardee county. But the 1928 campaign went down in history as being one of the most bitter in the last century. Perhaps at no previous election

had so much scurrilous literature been circulated and read.

There was much political effort put forth, even before the presidential candidates were chosen. Numerous speeches were delivered for and against them and literature was being distributed tending to distort the public mind and sway the voters one way or the other.

The Republicans quickly took advantage of the anti-Catholic sentiment and organized every precinct in the county. By so doing, they were able to wage a campaign that had a telling effect when the votes were counted.

On the other hand, the Democratic followers put forth practically no effort to corral the votes. They were unorganized and inactive. The result of this inactivity on their part is too well known to need recording here. Anyway, the Democrats lost practically every precinct in the county, most of them by large majorities, and their defeats ranged from constable to president.

The voters of Florida elected Doyle E. Carlton governor by a majority of 50,000 and on Tuesday, January 8th, he took the oath of office as chief executive of the state. A monster parade representing every section of the state took part in the inaugural parade and thousands of people attended. It was the most elaborate inauguration in the history of Florida.

The 1929 sessions of the Florida legislature will go down in history as having accomplished much in the way of setting Florida in order. Two sessions were held, the regular session closing the first of June after a sixty-day term and a special session being held immediately afterwards, closing on Friday, June 21st.

Commendation should be given the legislation and the governor for the enactment of the Everglades flood control measures, for agricultural legislation and for desirable changes in the election laws of Florida and the tax collection laws.

Notable in the election law changes is the abolition of the second choice votes and the permission to use voting machines. The Bryan primary law was repealed.

Thinking men generally approve Governor Carlton's financial program since upon it depends the salvation of Florida as regards retirement of bonds and payment of interest, continuation of the highway program and providing more revenue for the operation of public schools and higher institutions.

The recommendations of the educational survey were not acted upon, but these probably were lost in the fight waged against the administration by a few filibusterers who apparently believed they were sent to Tallahassee to fight every constructive measure that came up instead of working for the good of the entire state.

The filibusterers were hopelessly beaten from early in the regular session, but they held doggedly on, giving up only after they became convinced that Governor Carlton and friends of the administration were determined to see that some worth while legislation was put through.

Governor Carlton's plan of distributing the gasoline tax was one of the most important measures put through in some time. It provides that of the five cent tax, two cents were to go to the state road department, two cents to the county bond pool fund, one cent of which went to the payment of dis-

strict road and bridge bonds and one cent to payment of county bonds, and the fifth cent went back to the counties equally, two-thirds of this going into the school fund and one-third to the lateral road fund.

The sixth cent gas tax, which was added, went back to the counties for school purposes and to the institutions of higher learning.

Many other changes in the state laws, notably the game and fish laws,

green fruit laws and tax collection laws, were made.

Application of the new legislative measures will result in lifting the burden of worry and debt from many counties groaning under a load that it was indeed hard to bear. It is believed that the laws will result in straightening out many financial problems and setting Florida's house in better order than it has been for many years.

CHAPTER XVI

As Hardee county grew in population, it expanded in every other way. As new settlers came, new communities sprang into being, with churches, schools, roads, etc. to serve them. Telephone lines were stretched into the outlying districts, railroads were built, highways paved, power lines spanned the forests and penetrated every section of the county, serving patrons in practically every community today.

It would be practically impossible to describe the growth of these industries in this brief space. Suffice it to say that within the last score of years almost all this growth took place. The industrial growth of the county has been in keeping with the increase in population and the development of the county agriculturally.

The Florida Public Service Company now has power lines covering a large part of the county and these are constantly being expanded. In Wauchula, power is furnished by a modern and efficient plant that is owned and operated municipally.

The Inter-County Telephone and Telegraph Company has telephone exchanges at Wauchula and Bowling Green, Zolfo Springs, Fort Green, Fort Green Springs, and Ona.

Travel to any part of the county is easy, especially with the splendid system of hard-surfaced highways, and

the train and bus lines. Rural free delivery routes serve patrons in the rural districts, while Wauchula has city delivery service.

It is a far cry from the days of thirty years ago when some eight thousand hampers of beans constituted the principal shipment of vegetables from this county. Since that time, the winter vegetable industry has constantly expanded until in the winter of 1928-1929 more than 1,300,000 crates of produce were shipped out of the county. More than 2,790 carloads of fruit and vegetables were sent out during the last season, including 2,608,700 quarts of strawberries, thousands of hampers of beans, tomatoes, pepper, cucumbers, eggplant, squash, turnips, cabbage, celery, okra, and other similar vegetables. It is estimated that the 1928-'29 crop of vegetables brought the growers of Hardee county more than \$1,500,000 based on average prices.

Most of this produce was sold for cash at the loading platforms, where a corps of buyers representing northern firms paid cash daily for fresh vegetables.

The Wauchula Truck Growers Association, which later became the Hardee County Growers, Inc., has marketed produce co-operatively for about fifteen years. It owns and operates one

of the largest vegetable packing houses in the state, the plant having a capacity of six cars daily. Tomatoes and cucumbers are carefully graded and packed at this house. The produce put up by this organization has been of high quality and always commands a premium on the northern markets because of the uniformity of grade and pack.

Strawberries have come to the front recently, and that industry alone has jumped from a volume of a few thousand quarts ten years ago to nearly three million quarts annually now.

Fruit growing has kept steady pace and last season's shipments from the county totaled 1,485 carloads of oranges, grapefruit and tangerines. Other shipments made include guavas, kumquats, limes and satsumas, these being in smaller quantities. While profitable, these latter fruits are not grown extensively as yet.

Cattle raising, once one of the principal industries in southwest Florida, has slowly declined in Hardee county and has given way to citrus and vegetable growing. However, there are still some large herds scattered throughout the county, and round-ups are not infrequent.

One of the largest herds in the county was sold in the fall of 1928 by John Collier, who disposed of 6,000 head for approximately \$120,000. These were loaded at Zolfo Springs and shipped by solid trainloads to Jacksonville, where they were butchered. This marked the passing of one of the most famous and best known brands in Hardee county. It was the breaking up of Mr. Collier's herd, his entire holdings being disposed of.

The Carlton Brothers own one of the largest herds in the county now,

and these are gradually being disposed of. During the spring of 1929, 1,000 head of these cattle were sold at one time for a price rumored to be \$25,000.

There are many other large herds still in the county.

The woods and plains that once were cattle-grazing grounds have been cut into truck farms and citrus groves, so that the cattle industry is becoming a passing one. Fortunes have been accumulated in the cattle business, but roads, railroads and new settlers have driven the range cattle to new pastures and within a few years there will be nothing left but a memory of the cattle that once roamed the sparsely settled country which we now know as Hardee county.

To attempt to list the numerous churches in Hardee county would be useless. There are splendid churches in every part of the county, led by capable ministers and with large congregations attending regularly. Could those old preachers of another day, Revs. McEwen and Hendry, return to Hardee county today and visit one of the several congregations where years ago they helped establish churches and preached to small gatherings of pioneers, they would be amazed and overjoyed.

Practically every denomination is represented: the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Christians, Primitive Baptists, Catholics, Pentecosts and others maintain churches and have regularly paid preachers in contrast to the few congregations of Baptists and Methodists whose members contributed whatever they could toward their pastor's living expenses in those days thirty, forty or fifty years ago.

There are good churches in every section of the county and they are en-

joying a steady and substantial growth.

Allow your mind to picture the first school in this county in 1867 when Daniel Carlton built a small log house and employed a teacher for his children and invited the neighbors to send their children to school in the one-room school that was poorly lighted and meagerly equipped, and then think of the many splendid school buildings which dot the county now and you will realize the rapid strides the county has made along educational lines.

Gradually, as more settlers came, new schools were established and more teachers employed, so that today no less than twenty-two schools employing more than one hundred teachers and giving instruction to about 3,000 children form the educational system of this county.

In those early days, no modern equipment or methods of instruction were available, neither was there a county superintendent to give assistance and advice to the teachers. Then the schools became county schools and were under the supervision of a county superintendent, but travel was slow and buildings and equipment were far from the best.

Today there are seventeen schools for white children and five for colored children in the county, including the county high school at Wauchula.

The schools are tending toward consolidation more as the years go by and travel becomes easier and less expensive. Recently, the schools in Lemon Grove, Maud, Parnell and Prospect sections were consolidated and a splendid brick building erected at Lemon Grove. This building, first occupied November 9, 1927, was erected at a cost of approximately \$45,000. It is

one-story, of brick construction, having six classrooms and an auditorium seating about 250. It has closets, rest rooms, and all modern conveniences. Children are transported to it by bus from the surrounding districts.

In July, 1929, schools at Vandolah and Ona were consolidated with Oak Grove, children from these districts being taught in the modern brick building there.

The county high school is located at Wauchula, and approximately 400 children received instruction there. The high schools at Bowling Green and Zolfo Springs were discontinued and children sent to Wauchula for instruction, while the grammar schools and junior high schools at the former places were continued.

The schools in Hardee county in 1929 may be listed as follows:

White schools: High school, Wauchula; Wauchula grade school, Bowling Green, Zolfo Springs, Lemon Grove, Popash, Pine Dale, Lake Branch, Torrey, College Hill, Center Hill, Fort Green, Gardner, Tura, Castalia, Limestone, Oak Grove. Colored schools: Zolfo Springs, Wauchula, Bowling Green, Dean's Still, and Limestone.

The growth of the schools and churches, as one will see, has kept step with that of the entire county as a whole and every district in the county is expending the full ten mills tax allowed by the state for school purposes.

Better trained teachers are being employed now and modern equipment is at their disposal. They are given every co-operation from the county school board and superintendent of public instruction, so that when a child completes his schooling in the county he is ready to enter college.

Perhaps as large if not larger percentage of Hardee county children enter college than those of any other county in the state.

Certainly, with the training and environment afforded by our modern and efficient schools and willing and patient teachers, our splendid churches and able pastors, with our fine roads, motor cars, power lines, radios, tele-

phones, telegraph, railroads and bus lines, with our fertile soil and delightful climate and with those innumerable opportunities which God himself can give and which He has so abundantly bestowed upon us, there is no reason why Hardee county should not continue to grow and develop and prosper in the future as it has in the past.

HISTORY OF WAUCHULA

The early history of Wauchula is very similar to that of a good many other South Florida towns, in that there was little or nothing doing until after the railroad was built through the town in 1886.

Fifty years before this, in 1836, the United States government built a road from Fort Hamer, a point on the Manatee river eight miles above the present town of Manatee. This road ran in a northwest direction, crossing Peace River four miles above Wauchula at what was called the Chokinicla ford, and extending to Fort Capron on the Indian river on the Florida East Coast. This road was largely used by the early settlers in their trips to the trading centers and remained in use some seventy-five years or more.

There were, however, no settlers in the Wauchula section until a good many years after that. On maps dated 1850 we find that a family of Whittens lived northeast of Wauchula, about where Heard bridge road crosses Peace river. This was the only family in the Wauchula section at that time.

The treaty signed with the Seminole Indians in 1839 and already given in the History of Hardee County, had little or no immediate effect upon this section, but gradually new settlers came and by 1850 we find that about

a dozen families lived in what is now Hardee county.

What later became known as the Wauchula section was first known as the Fort Hartsuff section. Fort Hartsuff, named after Captain George L. Hartsuff, was located about two miles southwest of the present townsite, and was established, according to War Department records, by Captain George L. Hartsuff, who was in charge of government operations in this section. The fort was occupied about August 8, 1851, and again April 23, 1856. Fort Hartsuff was the western terminus of a road leading from Fort Hamer on the Manatee river.

This continued to be known as the Fort Hartsuff section until about 1874, when Eli English settled about one mile south of the present townsite and opened a store. The place then became known as English. There was no other store or business house south of Fort Meade. Mr. English hauled his goods by ox team from Tampa, seventy-five miles away, and it required about a week to make the round trip.

At that time there were only about seven families living in this immediate neighborhood. They were: W. Whitten, Eli English, Albert Carlton, W. P. McEwen, Lewis Carlton W. A. McEwen and D. M. Cason. The entire

population of the county (it was Manatee county until 1885) was about three or four hundred. The settlers were so badly scattered that one could travel for days without coming to a habitation, unless he kept on the main road, along which a few pioneers had settled.

The agricultural products of the community at that time consisted of sweet potatoes, sugar cane and Indian corn, along with a few scattering orange trees which were planted by a set of early settlers who came to this section a few years before the Indian war of 1856. Among these earlier settlers were Dempsey Whiddon, William McCollough and Captain George S. Payne, the latter a sailor and adventurer.

Payne and Whiddon were killed July 17, 1849, at a point just west of where Payne's creek enters Peace river about four miles north of Wauchula and a thin granite slab was placed over the graves.

Just here it may be mentioned that this slab was sent here by Payne's sister, who lived in Cornwall, Conn. This marker was restored and set in a concrete block, which was dedicated on July 16, 1929, just eighty years after Payne and Whiddon were massacred by the Indians. It was chiefly through the efforts of the Wauchula Kiwanis Club that this granite slab was restored and preserved permanently.

The agricultural products grown here in the early days were sold in Tampa and Manatee, and the following is taken from the DeSoto county edition of the Tampa Tribune of January 10, 1909:

"These products were sold at Tampa and Manatee town, and together with

cattle that were raised on the plains constituted the entire source of income for the community. In those days there were no great markets from which to secure a juicy steak or baker shops from which to secure a loaf of bread for breakfast. If these very essential items had not been supplied considerably in advance of the meal hour they were eliminated and palmetto cabbage and yams resorted to. The woods were full of game at that time, the old scouts could take their long-barreled rifles and take to the woods which came right up to their very doors, and secure sufficient fresh meat in a few hours to last as long as they could keep it, for it must be remembered that ice factories were scarce and far between at that time. In 1874 there was but one 40 acres of land pre-empted and properly registered in the land office, then located at Fort Green, it having been taken up by Albert Hendry. It was the custom in those days for a settler to stride his horse and ride around over the country until he found a location suitable to his needs; he then built a log cabin on it and called all the land he cared to claim his own. No surveys were made and very few persons were acquainted with the tax assessor or collector.

"When the great influx of immigrants occurred along about 1883 to 1887, there was a great scramble made to get to the land office and have claims and surveys recorded, so that the improvements made on these homesteaded places could not be secured by later settlers. A survey was gradually made, claims were adjusted, differences were settled, and finally the records were placed in such shape that a settler could tell exactly what

the title and claims were that existed against any certain parcel of land.

"The early pioneers left a stablitation behind them upon which has been erected an ineradicable degree of illustriousness, fraught with character, benevolence and dependableness which permeates the Wauchula vicinity today. They instructed their children that it is not 'all of life to life nor all of death to die,' they taught them that an honorable person, even though he were not gilded with riches which will eventually fade away, was of more importance to the community, society, state and nation than a disreputable scoundrel who through his acute chicanery had been enabled to absorb the material vitality of his community like a monstrous, thoughtless, selfish parasite whose only ambition was to prey upon those who inadvertently allowed themselves to drift within his grasp."

In 1886 the railroad was built through Wauchula. At that time the settlement was still called English and an effort was made to locate the railroad station about a mile south of the present site. This was unsuccessful, however, and the railroad company built the railroad where it now stands. The town they named Wauchula. Just who gave the town its name, which by the way, is the only one of its name in the United States, according to postal guides, is not known. There are other towns with names nearly like Wauchula, one of them being Waukulla, Florida, but so far as can be ascertained, there is not another post office or incorporated town in this country named Wauchula.

The name Wauchula comes from the Miccosoukee Indian word meaning "the

call of the sandhill crane." The name has been corrupted by the white man from the Indian word, Wa-tu-la-ha-kee, which has the above meaning. (This information has been secured from the Indians themselves by Stanley Hanson, Indian agent, at Fort Myers.)

There are many who say the word means "Bird on the Nest" and others claim it means "Buzzard's Roost," but the Miccosoukee Indians say not.

To E. L. Hockersmith, an experienced woodsman and a man who has spent considerable time in this section and in the country south of here, we are indebted for a description of a sandhill crane and a glimpse at the bird's habits.

Mr. Hockersmith says he has witnessed two sandhill crane dances, which are held at mating time, in the spring. The cranes gather in a large circle and one male bird is in the center of the ring. This bird goes around the ring with a swinging motion similar to dancing and finally chooses his mate. The two leave the scene and others carry through the same procedure until all have mated.

The birds have a peculiar call somewhat similar to that of other cranes and resemble the common crane very much.

The sandhill cranes have practically disappeared from this section now and all we have to remind us of them is the Indian word, Wauchula, which however, now means a thriving town, the county seat of Hardee county, and one of the best known and most prosperous towns in the state. Back in 1886, though it was just beginning and at that time was nothing but a railroad village in the pine woods.

The Florida Southern Railway was built through Wauchula in the spring of 1886, and immediately thereafter the tide of new settlers became swollen.

An interesting account of the town in its infancy is given in a Tampa paper dated September 19, 1888. The clipping reads as follows:

"This village is a regular station on the Florida Southern Railway in DeSoto county, at a point 51 miles north of Punta Gorda and 25 miles south of Bartow. It has five general merchandise stores, one drug store, a post office, and one excellent shoemaker, with shop in operation. It has a most admirably managed hotel, a first-class physician, a depot under the control of an agent who keeps freight, passenger and telegraphic departments in excellent order.

"The Missionary Baptists and Methodists have organized churches. The Sunday schools have about 100 regular scholars enrolled, and meet every Sunday.

"The public school numbers 120 scholars, under Rev. T. J. Sparkman, principal, and Miss Mary A. Payne, assistant, each of whom is highly esteemed here. There is also a prosperous Masonic lodge here.

"Rich lands are in great abundance on the east and west of town, interspersed with orange groves so numerous and well-developed as to constitute the chief basis for wealth, present and prospective.

"Wauchula furnishes a vast amount of railway timbers, such as crossties and pilings. The only water power grist mill in South Florida is located nearby and is a success. There is a large sawmill which has been doing

business here several years, and another near at hand.

"The Scott Phosphate Works, now in successful operation, gives employment to many hands, distributes thousands of dollars, and will long continue so to do.

"Nathan Cochran, merchant recently displayed a bunch of sugar cane from one planted stalk, having thirty-six stalks, averaging seven feet each in height, and matured."

The telegraph and freight agent spoken of above was Mr. A. G. Smith, who came here in the fall of 1886 as freight and express agent and telegraph operator.

The water mill spoken of was about two miles south of the present townsite, on the creek near the Scott grove. It was operated by Mr. Will Bostick.

Nathan Cochran spoken of above, was the father of the first merchant in Wauchula. Mr. J. N. Cochran, son of Nathan A. Cochran, came here to sell goods for his father in the spring of 1886. The senior Mr. Cochran was then postmaster at Medulla, near Lakeland. The goods were kept in a small shack located about where Palmetto street and Fifth avenue intersect. The elder Mr. Cochran joined his son here in the fall of 1886.

The first church established in this section was located at Fort Hartsuff, southwest of the present townsite. It was a log structure and was used by both Baptists and Methodists. Rev. Sam Carson, on the Methodist circuit, was the first pastor. Rev. Sellers was the senior pastor. Rev. T. J. Sparkman was the first Baptist preacher to occupy the pulpit in Wauchula.

Rev. T. J. Sparkman, preacher, teacher and educator, taught the first

school in Wauchula, along about 1884 or 1885. The building was of logs and was west of the present townsite.

Wauchula's first postmaster was Mr. U. O. McConnell, who kept the office in a little building at the northeast corner of Main street and Fifth avenue, or where the main road crossed the railroad at that time.

The first hotel to be operated here was the Bel-Air hotel, opened in 1891 by Mr. A. C. Clavel, and it was located nearly opposite and a little northwest of the depot.

In September, 1895, the first blacksmith shop in Wauchula was opened. It was located at the corner of what is now Main street and Sixth avenue, where the Royal Theater now stands. The shop was opened by E. C. Stenstrom, who with R. C. Clarke, one-time mayor organized the Wauchula Telephone Company here on February 5, 1905.

Hundreds of people came to Wauchula between the years 1886 and 1906. The new country was just then being opened up, land was cheap and productive, opportunities were unlimited.

Among those who came here during that decade are some of the most substantial citizens of the county to-day. They had a most active part in building the community and county, and their names brighten the pages of Hardee county's history like glowing candles on a dark night. They worked hard, made little but saved some of that, and were ever ready to put forth their best efforts toward building a better town and community. They were energetic, progressive, likeable. It is chiefly through the efforts of those early pioneers and the accomplishments which must be credited to them that we are able to enjoy to such

an extent the country they helped build.

Early in March, 1901 Wauchula's first newspaper was established, the first issue being printed March 15, 1901. This paper was The Florida Advocate, with George M. Goolsby as editor and publisher. For twenty-four years Mr. Goolsby was on the job day and night for Wauchula and this section. A constant booster, energetic, resourceful, original, unique, he left a record in Hardee county's history that time can only make brighter. Until his death in May, 1925, George M. Goolsby was continually on the firing line, working for what he believed to be the best interests of Wauchula and this community and section.

Never was a movement started that was just and worthy but what he threw his whole efforts into it and helped put it across. Always on the alert for anything that would benefit the community, he was none the less constantly on guard against what was hurtful, degrading.

His death was cause for universal sorrow in the community and throughout South Florida, and so great was his influence that it was suggested the county be named after him, but he modestly declined that honor and suggested that it be called something else.

The newspaper which he founded has become an institution, mainly through his efforts and those of his wife, who has managed the business since his death.

The following notice of incorporation was printed in the fall of 1902:

NOTICE OF INCORPORATION

By authority vested in a committee at a mass meeting held at the depot in Wauchula, Florida, Tuesday, August

19, 1902, an election is hereby called to take place at Carlton & Carlton's store in Wauchula, Florida, on Monday, September 29, 1902, at 7:30 p. m., for the purpose of incorporating the Town of Wauchula and electing officers for the same.

The incorporated limits of said town to include the southwest quarter of Section Three and southeast quarter of Section Four, Township Thirty-four South, Range Twenty-five East, all in DeSoto county, Florida.

All legal voters residing in the territory described above will be entitled to vote at this election.

C. J. CARLTON,
A. L. TURNER,
GEO. M. GOOLSBY,
Committee.

The result of the above election was that twenty-seven votes were cast in favor of incorporating and none against.

The following officers were elected: Thos. G. Wilkison, mayor; A. G. Smith, W. A. Southerland, A. B. Townsend, F. B. Rainey, J. M. Beeson and C. J. Carlton, aldermen; Geo. M. Goolsby, clerk, and A. L. Turner, marshal.

Oath of office was administered to the mayor by D. M. Cason, justice of the peace in and for DeSoto county, Florida. The mayor afterwards administered the oath of office to the aldermen, clerk and marshal.

One of the first acts of the new government was to appropriate the sum of \$1.50 for the purchase of a night stick for the marshal.

On Tuesday, August 4, 1903, the Wauchula school became a county high school. At that time it had four teachers, with Professor Joseph Wilkison as principal. The year before that it had two teachers.

In 1904 Wauchula's first bank came into being. It was opened under the name of Carlton and Carlton, Bankers. Albert Carlton was president and C. J. Carlton, cashier. The banking house was at the corner of Main street and Fifth avenue, in a store operated by the Carltons at that time. Later it was housed in a separate building and in 1916 became the Carlton National Bank and occupied a handsome building on the spot where the institution was opened.

It is interesting to note that in 1905 the population of Wauchula was 796 whites and four negroes.

In 1907 Wauchula acquired her second banking institution when the Bank of Wauchula opened for business in February of that year. The officers were: A. G. Smith, president; W. E. Mitchell, vice-president; G. C. McWhirter, assistant cashier. Later D. O. Ratliff became vice-president and J. C. McEwen cashier, these two holding their respective positions with the bank for many years.

In those days Wauchula was a straggling but rapidly growing village, with no paved streets or sidewalks. There were no automobiles, electric lights, or other modern conveniences such as we enjoy today.

Wauchula's first fire department was organized on June 4, 1906, with William Ault, who was town marshal, as chief, and I. C. Smith, Harry Stansfield and A. C. Clavel as assistants.

On June 18, 1906, work started on the new building for the First Baptist Church, but the building was not finally completed until three years later, being dedicated on September 19, 1909. The building was 50 by 70 feet and cost approximately \$7,000. Since that time it has been enlarged, but the

building erected in 1909 is still in use. it stands on Sixth avenue, between Main and Palmetto streets.

The original Missionary Baptist church was a site near where Moore's mill was located, in the northwest section of town. Later it was moved to the present site, and then the new church building was erected.

Wauchula's first ice plant was started in 1907 and in November of that year the first ice was manufactured here. J. L. Close was manager of the plant.

The Carlton National Bank building was erected in 1909 and was first occupied in February of that year. It was two stories in height and extended from Fifth avenue to the alley about halfway between Fifth and Sixth avenues on Main street.

In 1909 the first unit of the grammar school was built on the lot between Seventh and Eighth avenues and between Oak and McEwen streets. The school originally was a two-room affair and was located near where Bay street and Eighth avenues intersect. The building there housed the school on the ground floor and the Masonic Hall above.

After the first unit of the school building was erected, the west building was put up and later the two buildings joined by another building. The three buildings comprise the grammar school now and are used by more than one thousand children, who seek education there each school term. For several years this was both the grammar school and high school, but later the new high school building was erected and the old building used exclusively for the lower grades.

The high school was started in 1925 and completed early in 1926. It occu-

pled the north half of the lot bounded on the north by Bay street, on the east by Eleventh avenue and on the west by the Dixie Highway, sometimes called Florida avenue.

It is a handsome brick building containing sixteen classrooms, a large auditorium, office rooms, a library, laboratories, a clinic, and all other conveniences. The building cost approximately \$50,000 and was first occupied in the spring of 1926.

On February 7, 1908, a disastrous fire swept the section of town on Fifth avenue between Main and Palmetto streets, destroying all the buildings in that block except the Peace River Hotel building, which was just being erected at that time. The flames burned the window casings out of the hotel building, but these were replaced with small loss, as the building was not completed when the fire occurred. Several buildings were destroyed and the loss was estimated at between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

In August, 1908, E. C. Stenstrom purchased the first automobile in Wauchula. A simple notice to that effect appeared in the paper. It read: "Mr. E. C. Stenstrom has purchased an automobile from Mr. Sheppard, of Torrey, and is now overhauling it. He will use it to look after the country lines of the Wauchula Telephone Company."

Little did anyone dream then that the automobile would play such an important part in the life of the community as well as the whole nation. It is a far cry from the day when Mr. Stenstrom's two-cylinder Cadillac chugged into town over rough sandy roads to attract a crowd of curious spectators who laughed at the funny-looking machine and watched for op-

portunities to say, when it refused to go, "Get a horse!" Today automobiles are shipped into town by the carload and go purring down Main street as noiselessly as a cat, attracting no attention whatever.

The first contract for sidewalks was let on January 7, 1911, for two and one-half miles of concrete sidewalks. Prior to this there were no sidewalks in the town. Today there are more than six miles of concrete sidewalks.

The first rural free mail delivery route in DeSoto county was established from the Wauchula post office and the first mail went out on March 1, 1912. J. N. Hendry was mail carrier on this route. The mail left Wauchula at ten-thirty and the route was as follows: North to J. T. Burnett's, northwest to west of R. C. Maddox's place, north and west to H. E. Albritton's, south and southeast to J. C. Harp's, south to the Wauchula and Bradenton road, west and southwest to T. N. Carlton's, south to J. G. Durrance's, east and northeast to W. E. Norris', northeast to John Conroy's, east to T. J. Johns', north and northeast to W. A. McEwen's, and north to Wauchula, returning there about six o'clock in the evening.

Wauchula experienced considerable trouble getting electric lights installed, but finally, on August 5, 1912, the city council granted a franchise to the Wauchula Manufacturing and Timber Company to furnish lights for the town. Work started at once and lights were soon turned on in town, with current from the mill. It was a gala night when they were first turned on, and the populace were impressed with their brilliancy and efficiency as compared with the old oil and gas lamps.

The Bank of Wauchula building was

erected in 1913 at the corner of Main street and Sixth avenue. Later it was extended to the alley between Sixth avenue and Fifth avenue, on Main street. The bank and store rooms occupied the ground floor while office rooms and the Seminole Theater were upstairs.

Perhaps the greatest growth recorded in Wauchula in any single year took place in 1914. In that year, on February 17th, the people voted to put in sewers, waterworks, and street paving. The vote was ninety for and fifteen against, and the election called for \$22,000 for waterworks, \$15,000 for sewers, and \$3,000 for paved streets.

On June 19, 1914, the cornerstone of the new Methodist church was laid at two-thirty in the afternoon. The church was organized in 1888 in the Baptist Church log meeting house near Moore's Mill. There were nine original members of the Wauchula Methodist Episcopal Church, South. They were: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph L. Bostick, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Wilkison, Mr. and Mrs. C. G. West, Mrs. M. A. Maddox, Mrs. Effie Spivey, and Mr. Wiley Hill.

The church was later moved to the corner of Oak street and Fifth avenue, about where Chase and Company's packing house was later built. In September, 1903, a hurricane destroyed this frame building and the church was moved to the corner of Seventh avenue and Main street, where the new building was erected in 1914. The new building was of brick and was a handsome structure.

In 1914 a number of other buildings were erected in Wauchula, and more than one hundred and fifty homes went up during that year. Among the important buildings erected that year

were: the Wauchula House, where the Hotel Simmons now stands, on Fifth avenue; the Beeson Brothers building at Seventh avenue and Main street; the railroad depot, and others.

In 1915 the building adjoining the Peace River Hotel building and known as the Orange Pharmacy building was erected by Harry Stansfield, while the Stenstrom building, at Sixth avenue and Main street, opposite the Bank of Wauchula, was built in 1915. This building included the Royal Theater and several stores.

In May, 1910, the Rev. Mr. T. J. Allison, supply pastor of the Presbyterian church at Arcadia, visited Wauchula and arranged to preach for the Presbyterian people here once each month. Both the Baptist and Methodist churches were used in conducting these services, and on Wednesday, November 16, 1910, the Presbyterian Church of Wauchula was organized.

The following members were enrolled: Mrs. Hattie Revell, Mrs. Annie E. Martin, Mrs. Mary McLeod, Mrs. George Carlton, Mr. T. K. McRae, Mr. J. B. Kirby, Mr. John Calvin McRae, Mr. A. G. Smith, Mrs. Minnie Smith Stansfield, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. S. Williams, Prof. D. B. Shaver, Mr. and Mrs. D. S. Ashburn, Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Rust and Miss Ivaloo Rust.

Mr. A. G. Smith was elected elder and Mr. T. K. McRae and Mr. Geo. S. Williams deacons.

Church meetings were held for a time in the Adventist church and later in the Seminole Theater. The new church building was first occupied in September, 1916.

The Adventist church was on South Seventh avenue and for more than twenty years was a thriving church. Then it gradually broke up and in

1922 was reorganized. The church building was abandoned and worship has been held at Bowling Green since that time.

The Primitive Baptist Church was one of the oldest in the town, being organized in the school house two miles west of the present townsite. Among those who organized the church were: Mr. and Mrs. B. T. Altman, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Altman, Mr. and Mrs. William Clavill, and a few others.

Shortly after the church was organized, a church building was erected and about 1906 the place of worship was moved into Wauchula, where Ninth avenue and McEwen street intersect. Here a frame building was erected and this continued in use until 1928, when it was sold and moved off the lot and a handsome concrete block structure erected in its place. The first pastor of the Primitive Baptist Church was Rev. E. Z. Hull.

The First Christian Church was organized here about 1914 and services were held in a little church on South Seventh avenue. B. E. Melindy was one of the first pastors.

About 1919 the church building was erected on the corner of Eighth avenue and Orange street. In 1927 this was enlarged to its present capacity and its appearance and seating arrangement and capacity greatly improved. Major Paul Crank is the present pastor and has been for the past three years.

St. Michael's Catholic Church was organized here about 1924 and the present building on North Sixth avenue erected at that time. Prior to that, there were a number of this faith who went to Arcadia to worship. Occasionally the priest would come to

Wauchula and hold services in the homes. Rev. Fr. Latiolus was priest here for many years, before he was transferred in the summer of 1929.

The Christian Science faith has several members who use the Woman's Club house on Seventh avenue as a place of worship.

The St. Paul Lutheran Church had an organization here for some time, but is at present inactive. It held services in the old opera house for several years.

There are two Pentecost churches, one on South Seventh avenue and one on South Eighth avenue. Services are held in them regularly.

After the building boom of 1914, things moved along gradually until after the World War. In 1918 what was known as the Wauchula House, located just back of the Carlton National Bank building on Fifth avenue, was taken over by the Wauchula Bank Building Association and Captain and Mrs. Frank H. Simmons became managers of this place. The name was changed to the Simmons Hotel.

In 1925 the hotel building was erected as it stands to day, and was formally opened on March 12, 1925. This is a handsome brick building having one hundred hotel rooms, many with private baths. A dining room seats 200 people and a large lobby is ample to care for the crowds and provides a splendid dance floor on special occasions. The hotel is three stories in height and is widely known among commercial men. It is frequently the meeting place for clubs and other gatherings.

During 1924 and 1925 the city again took on a building boom and many buildings were erected during those

years, among them being the Kilgore building, Main street and Seventh avenue; the Anderson building, remodeled; the new Glorius building on Eighth avenue, and many others.

October 6, 1925, a bond election for the purpose of erecting the new city hall in Wauchula was held, and this carried by a vote of 103 to 95. The building was erected at the intersection of Fourth avenue and East Main street at a cost of approximately \$80,000. It contains a large auditorium seating about nine hundred, and houses all the city offices, fire department, etc. A projection booth for the showing of motion pictures and a large stage is included in the auditorium. Offices of the chamber of commerce, the council meeting room, the mayors office, and others also are located in this building, which was formally dedicated on April 12, 1927. The building was designed by Leo M. Elliott, of Tampa, and built by Paul H. Smith.

On March 23, 1926, a paving contract was let to the William P. McDonald Construction Company for eight and three-fourths miles of paved streets, at a cost of \$408,000. In addition, a contract was let to the E. M. Scheflow Company for \$78,000 for storm sewers. Other contracts for water mains and other improvements were let the same year, and when the program was finally completed in 1927 the city had over fifteen miles of paved streets and over six miles of sidewalks. Engineer W. N. Tonkin had charge of the work.

On Tuesday, February 23, 1926, ten blocks of white way lights were turned on for the first time, giving the city a white way extending from First avenue to the Dixie Highway. When work on the new courthouse was completed,

three more blocks of white way lights were put in.

In September, 1926, work on the new \$50,000 Brown Arcade building on West Main street was completed. This building, designed by H. G. Little, of Wauchula, and built by L. W. Bostick, also of Wauchula, is one of the finest buildings of its kind in this section, containing space for seven stores downstairs and thirteen apartments upstairs.

A month later, in October, 1926, the Smith building on East Main street was finished at a cost of approximately \$30,000. This building contains space for several offices and a large store, with seven apartments upstairs. It is of brick and was designed by H. G. Little and built by local labor.

In 1927 the City of Wauchula, co-operating with the State Road Department, rebuilt the Dixie Highway through the town, at a cost of approximately \$98,000. This road was made thirty feet wide in order to accommodate the city traffic as well as through traffic between Lakeland and Fort Myers and intervening points.

The completion of the court house and other public and private buildings in 1926 and 1927 practically completed the building program, and it is believed the town is amply able to care for its growth for some time, having hotels, public buildings and residences sufficient to care for a substantial number of visitors and those who wish to make it their home.

The Florida Hotel was opened in the Kilgore building in 1925 and provides several rooms and other facilities for travelers and tourists.

In 1926 the Wauchula House was remodeled and opened for business at the corner of Sixth avenue and Orange

street. This likewise contains many rooms and is patronized by both travelers and local people as a rooming and boarding house.

The Peace River Hotel, the second largest in the city, was remodeled and renovated in 1927 and enjoys a good business as a rooming and boarding place. It also provides a convenient meeting place for clubs and social gatherings.

This history would not be complete without a mention of the clubs, societies and lodges that have had so much to do with building the town and community.

We shall strive to give as much detail regarding these as our limited space and time will permit.

Wauchula's first lodge, the Masonic Order, was organized in 1888 and the charter was issued on January 18th of that year. The following were the officers: Peter Brown, Worshipful Master; H. E. Carlton, Senior Warden; E. F. Durrance, Junior Warden. The lodge was known as Wauchula Lodge, No. 99.

After some years, the charter was turned in and in 1899 was re-issued. The following were officers at that time: Marion G. Carlton, Worshipful Master; J. D. Southerland, Senior Warden; J. L. Bostick, Junior Warden; J. W. Farr, treasurer; W. A. Southerland, secretary; John W. Hendry, chaplain; R. D. Moore, senior deacon; James A. Carlton, junior deacon; C. G. West, tyler.

The members were: Joseph L. Bostick, E. F. Bostick, M. G. Carlton, James A. Carlton, J. W. Farr, John W. Hendry, R. D. Moore, J. D. Southerland, W. A. Southerland, Samuel K. Revell, Robert Roberts, William Whid-

den, C. G. West and W. G. Whitfield.

The first Masonic Hall was about where Eighth avenue and Bay street intersect. This was also the first school building in the present townsite of Wauchula. The school occupied the ground floor and the Masonic Lodge met upstairs. Later, the Masonic meeting place was moved to Palmetto street east of the railroad and finally, in 1902, the Masonic Hall on West Main street between Sixth and Seventh avenues was erected.

The Wauchula chapter, Order of Eastern Star, came into being in 1911, the charter being dated May 11, 1911. Officers were: Mrs. Lillian B. McCall, Worthy Matron; A. C. McCall, Worthy Patron; Miss Vickie Stenstrom, Associate Matron.

Members of the Eastern Star order when it was formed included the following: Mrs. Lillian B. McCall, Miss Vickie Stenstrom, Mrs. Mary M. Johnston, Mrs. Ella D. Southerland, Mrs. Mary O. Folsom, Mrs. Laura H. Goolsby, Miss Annie Stenstrom, Mrs. Ethel Stenstrom, Mrs. Anna I. Hammel, Miss Willie Green, Miss Caddibell Farr, Mrs. Grace C. Shelton, and Mrs. Sallie Teachy. Brothers were: A. C. McCall, A. S. Johnson, A. Y. Teachy, A. J. Stenstrom, J. N. Butler, J. A. Lewis, W. E. Folsom, Geo. M. Goolsby and Dr. F. Y. Hanna.

The charter for the Knights of Pythias lodge in Wauchula was issued June 27, 1904, by M. W. Stewart, Grand Chancellor, and W. H. Latimer, Keeper of Records and Seals. Charter members were: J. W. Farr, J. L. Sauls, S. J. Broer, F. R. Miller, R. C. Clarke, Geo. K. Smith, A. L. Turner, George L. Cason, Jesse C. McEwen, E. C. Stenstrom, L. W. Whitehurst, A. B. Townsend, L. N. Townsend, W. W.

Green, Sam Shelton, J. L. Clarke, J. M. Beeson, D. E. Gillette, L. F. Stephens, W. J. Raulerson, and H. C. Holland.

The Woodmen of the World charter was granted September 6, 1905, and the following were charter members: P. G. Shaver, J. Wilson, H. F. Ceiley, E. P. Rust, R. E. Cochran, C. G. Whitley, T. J. Johns, B. G. Wood, B. M. Edwards.

The charter for the Woodman Circle was granted September 17, 1906, and charter members were: Ethel Stephens, Zelma O. Vaughn, Joseph Wilson, Robert E. Cochran, Victoria Stenstrom, Effie Rainey, Laura A. Bowman, Theodora Hiers, Albert Bragdon, Josiah Boston and Donnie A. Hendry.

Wauchula's youngest lodge, the Odd Fellows, was organized in the spring of 1927, the charter being granted on April 20th of that year. M. H. Platt was Noble Grand and Bryant L. Coker, secretary. The charter members were: J. H. Stewart, Lee O. Daniels, John A. Walker, W. L. Sams, M. H. Platt, and Bryant L. Coker.

The Rebekahs Lodge was organized here at the same time, the charter bearing the same date, April 20, 1927. Charter members were: Mrs. Hazel Hahn, Mrs. W. L. Sams, Mrs. Jennie French, Mrs. J. H. Wetherington, Mrs. Cora Ammans, Mrs. Ioane Stickle, Mrs. Ruth Carlton, Miss Gladys Hough, Ray J. Hahn, George Ammans, J. A. Stickle, H. O. Carlton and Bryant L. Coker.

Since the earliest days, Wauchula has been well supplied with good newspapers. The first paper to be established here was The Florida Advocate, which made its appearance in 1901, with Geo. M. Goolsby as editor

and publisher and Mrs. Laura H. Goolsby, business manager.

Shortly after that, a Baptist paper appeared under the management of P. W. Corr. It was called Florida Tidings and was the official organ of the State W. C. T. U. Mrs. P. W. Corr was editor, and it continued for a couple of years, being first published in the A. G. Smith packing house just east of the railroad.

About the year 1908 a paper called the Wauchula Telegram was started under the management of Hugh Sparkman. It was printed in a small building on the site where the Bank of Wauchula building now stands. This paper lasted for a couple of years and was then absorbed by The Florida Advocate.

Another paper called "Land and The Law," gotten out by A. Yancy Teachy and Elam B. Carlton, was printed here for some time, but died after a short existence. It was issued monthly.

In 1921, soon after the county was divided and Hardee county was formed, the Zolfo Truth, owned by the Skipper-Roberts interests, was moved to Wauchula and the name changed to the Hardee County Herald. It was under the management and editorship of Stewart Hancock, who continues to publish it as a weekly newspaper.

The Wauchula Magnet, a monthly publication containing photographs and interesting data about this section, was published by George M. Goolsby for some time.

Hot Shots, a small weekly publication, appeared during the "boom" and was edited by Henry Smither. It was short-lived.

The influence of good newspapers has been keenly felt in Wauchula, and

the vast amount of valuable publicity given the town and county through this means has done more perhaps than anything else to help build the county and inform the outside world of the county's possibilities and of happenings here.

The Wauchula Chamber of Commerce, which succeeded the old Board of Trade, has likewise been active in securing publicity and working for the establishment of new industries that will benefit the farmers and townspeople alike. The Board of Trade was perhaps the most active organization of its kind in Florida at that time and its influence was felt long after it had been succeeded by the Chamber of Commerce, which, somehow, has never been able to get the wholehearted enthusiasm and co-operation the Board of Trade enjoyed in the early days of Wauchula's prosperity and growth.

In giving a brief summary of the civic organizations in Wauchula, many omissions must be made, as time and space will not permit of their mention and details in many instances are lacking.

Suffice it to say, however, that Wauchula enjoys some of the liveliest and most progressive clubs in the nation. These organizations have the splendid co-operation of members and anything undertaken is carried to a speedy and successful conclusion. Nearly every business man in the town belongs to one or the other of the civic clubs and the women are particularly active in their organizations, so that the town reaps the fullest benefit of its citizenry.

One of the most progressive and influential clubs in Wauchula was organized on April 20, 1906, when a

group of women assembled in Stevens Hall and there organized the Village Improvement Association.

Officers of that organization were: Mrs. George M. Goolsby, president; Mrs. H. C. Burke, first vice-president; Mrs. L. M. Hammel, second vice-president; Mrs. T. F. Williams, secretary; Mrs. H. B. Hadsell, treasurer, and an executive committee composed of Mrs. A. C. Clavel, Mrs. D. M. Edwards and Mrs. M. A. Cason.

The Village Improvement Association had twelve members, and one of the first acts was to have several barrels painted and placed on the streets for the reception of waste instead of allowing this to be scattered on the streets. It was instrumental in having several ordinances passed, which prohibited hogs and cows from roaming the streets, and improved the town generally. In 1912 the Village Improvement Association built the bandstand on West Main street, adjoining the Masonic Hall, which stand remained in use until the new bandstand on the courthouse grounds was opened in 1927.

In 1918 the Village Improvement Association changed its name to that of the Civic League of Wauchula.

In September, 1923, a charter was secured and the Civic League was incorporated for \$10,000.00. The name was afterwards changed to the Woman's Club of Wauchula. In 1924 the Woman's Club erected its present clubhouse at the corner of Seventh avenue and Palmetto street at a cost of approximately \$8,000.

Of the original organizers and members of the Village Improvement Association, five remained members in 1927, when their names were placed on the honor roll with all the full priv-

ileges of membership but without dues or responsibilities except voluntary. They were: Mrs. A. G. Smith, Mrs. Geo. M. Goolsby, Mrs. H. B. Hadsell, Mrs. A. C. Clavel and Mrs. T. F. Williams.

The Music Club was organized on Thursday, October 29, 1914. It held the first meeting at the home of Mrs. J. E. Garner and was called the Ladies' Musical Club. About fifteen ladies were present at the first meeting and the following officers were elected: Mrs. J. E. Garner, president; Mrs. C. L. Richardson, Jr., vice-president; Mrs. Effie M. Baxter, secretary.

The organization meeting was held on Friday, November 13, 1914, at the home of Mrs. Effie M. Baxter. The constitution and by-laws, having been prepared previously, were adopted at this meeting and the name chosen was the "Ladies' Friday Musicales." It has since been changed to the "Wednesday Musicales."

The following is the first membership roll: Mesdames H. M. Alexander, J. H. Boyer, Effie M. Baxter, L. W. Bostick, W. B. Beeson, W. W. Carter, Harold Crews, Mrs. Chambers, J. L. Close, C. P. Durrance, Earnest Edwards, J. E. Garner, G. M. Goolsby, E. R. Harman, John C. McEwen, W. D. McInnis, A. G. Smith, I. C. Smith, A. T. Smith, J. Wiley Smith, E. C. Stenstrom, A. Y. Teachy, C. L. Richardson, Misses Ella Beeson, Miss Chandler, Jama Duncan, Jessie Hadsell and Maude Wilkison.

The club work consists of programs, biographies of composers, current events, musical history, etc. Meetings are held twice a month.

In April, 1926, the Wauchula Kiwanis Club came into being. A big charter night celebration was held on

April 20, 1926, attended by many of the citizens of the town. Hon. Doyle F. Carlton, then candidate for governor and later governor of the state, was the principal speaker. Others were on the program and a banquet dinner was served at the Simmons Hotel.

Charter members of the club were: W. B. Beeson, C. R. Bostick, Ralph Bloodworth, L. Grady Burton, L. M. Carlton, F. A. Chambless, E. S. Clavel, J. W. Earnest, Paul C. Erler, R. O. Evans, J. E. Garner, E. R. Harman, M. C. Kayton, J. A. McInnis, W. D. McInnis, Frank Palmer, A. A. Poucher, J. Roy Powell, C. A. Reif, Ira Rigdon, I. Silverman, Al G. Smith.

L. Grady Burton was elected president, R. O. Evans vice-president and Al G. Smith secretary.

The club put on a "home beautiful" contest in 1927-'28 and awarded prizes totaling \$500 for the most beautiful homes in the city. It also sponsored other movements for the benefit of the town and in 1929 co-operated with the Wauchula Lions Club in restoring Payne's Monument, a short distance north of the city.

Membership in the Kiwanis Club has grown to thirty-six and meetings are held every Tuesday at 12:15 p. m. at the Woman's Club.

In July, 1927, the Lions Club was organized in Wauchula. The charter was presented in October of the same year and the following were charter members: W. C. Buchanan, L. J. Carlton, T. Hoyt Carlton, Staten H. Chance, Bryant L. Coker, L. J. Detrick, M. A. Farmer, B. T. Garrett, W. W. Gillette, D. H. Greer, George W. Glaab, Stewart Hancock, R. H. Herr, Post Hallowses, J. A. Lane, Gordon B. Langford, G. I. R. Lentz, M. B. Miller,

A. Z. Olliff, L. N. Pipkin, W. T. Poland, Irvin Rhyan, S. F. Schwinn, Frank H. Simmons, J. F. Stewart, D. H. Swann and Marion Thompson.

Officers of the club were T. Hoyt Carlton, president; D. H. Greere, secretary, and Marion Thompson, treasurer.

The Lions Club sponsored the Spring Festival held here in February and March, 1928, and has taken an active part in other matters of a civic nature, particularly the schools and city sanitation.

Weekly meetings are held every Wednesday at 12:15 p. m. at the Peace River Hotel.

The Business and Professional Woman's Club was organized on November 1, 1927, with the following charter members: Leita M. Miller, Montine Powell, Maude Wilkison, Ruth Conroy, Mary A. Patrick, Evelyn Smith, Charlene Smith, Mildred Romans, Laura Goolsby, Anna Mae Taylor, Alma Gillis, Lucy Mae Sowell, Anabel Mathis, Carrie Altman, Fannie Alexander and Oddie Barker.

The first officers were: Mrs. Leita M. Miller, president; Mrs. Montine Powell, vice-president; Miss Maude Wilkison, recording secretary; Miss Ruth Conroy, corresponding secretary; Miss Mary A. Patrick, treasurer.

The club has made rapid strides since it was organized and has gained an enviable reputation among service clubs of the city. The club meets the second and fourth Monday night of each month at Miss Maude Wilkison's home.

The club's major objective this year is the awarding of a scholarship in the form of a loan to girls who are unable to attend school without financial aid.

The club has a six-piece orchestra, which is much enjoyed by the club and other local organizations and is well received wherever it appears.

In the fall of 1926 the present municipal band was organized under the direction of Professor Frank Sturchio. Prior to this time, the city has had bands for several years. One of the first was the Wauchula Cornet Band, organized about 1897 with the following members: A. Yancy Teachy, drum; J. C. McEwen, snare drum; L. W. Bostick, bass; E. C. Stenstrom, cornet; Joe McEwen, baritone; W. A. Southerland, cornet; Jim Southerland, tenor; H. C. Southerland, solo cornet, and W. K. Southerland, alto.

Oscar C. Ross directed a band here for ten or a dozen years, and finally in 1926 the present band was organized. Members of other bands were instrumental in forming the latest one and have given willingly of their time and energy in its behalf. The band contains about thirty pieces and gives weekly concerts, every Friday night during the summer and on Sunday afternoon during the winter months. The band has gained quite a reputation throughout the state, and has appeared at several conventions here and in other towns.

A high school orchestra is also part of the musical realm in Wauchula, this being directed by Professor Sturchio and composed of members of the local high school. It plays for high school entertainments, commencement, etc.

On May 23, 1919, World War veterans met in Wauchula and organized the Wauchula American Legion Post

with the following officers: C. D. Frazier, post commander; F. A. Chambliss, post vice-commander; J. T. Hancock, post adjutant; W. W. Gillette, post finance officer; J. M. Simmons, post sergeant at arms.

Some fast work on the part of Post Commander Frazier put the organization papers before the state officers and at the first department convention in Jacksonville June 10th and 11th of that year and the Wauchula post was officially chartered as the Herger Williams Post, No. 2, American Legion, Department of Florida. The name was chosen because Herger Williams was the first Wauchula boy to give his life in France.

Herger Williams was born in Wauchula, August 8, 1897. He was educated at the Oak Grove grammar school and at Wauchula high school. He enlisted in the army on September 16, 1917, and was trained at Camp Wheeler, leaving there June 12, 1918, and arriving in France July 1st. He was at once sent to the Argonne and was wounded in action July 18th and died from his wounds on July 31, 1918. He was buried at Lemogne Heights on the Marne river in France and in the spring of 1921 the remains were brought back to Wauchula and buried with full military honors in Oak Grove cemetery.

The local Legion post has been particularly active during times of distress and has given aid in storm-stricken areas of the state during 1926 and 1928, for which national citations were received. It has also been of real service to veterans in solving their postwar problems.

HISTORY OF BOWLING GREEN

The town of Bowling Green was unknown prior to about the year 1885. Where paved streets and sidewalks, business houses and residences are now, was nothing but a wilderness forty-five or fifty years ago. Wild game abounded and the foot of civilization had tread but lightly upon this section at that time.

Maps made by United States government surveyors between 1843 and 1855 show only two families living anywhere near the present townsite of Bowling Green. A family of Pelhams lived in the College Hill section and a family of Underhills lived about where the Zazelli grove is now. There was not another family living within three miles of the present town.

There was, however, a fort near there. This was called Fort Choconickla, or Chokkonikla, established October 26, 1849, and abandoned July 18, 1850. It was garrisoned April 30, 1850, by the Headquarters and Companies E and M, Fourth U. S. Artillery.

The fort was on a high bluff overlooking Peace river and the surrounding country. All traces of it have practically disappeared now.

When the Florida Southern railroad was being constructed south from Bartow toward Punta Gorda, Bowling Green became a reality.

Just prior to that time, several fam-

ilies had settled in that vicinity. The first to homestead where the present townsite is were A. M. Chester and N. M. Bryan.

In 1885, a year before the railroad came through, a post office was established. It was called Utica and A. M. Chester was the first postmaster.

The first man to build a store in the town was J. T. Bryan, who was succeeded by Cyrus Jones and I. A. Mason, who sold general merchandise for some fifteen years.

In 1886 a number of Bowling Green, Kentucky, people came to the town then called Utica and made large purchases of land. They changed the name of the place from Utica to Bowling Green, in honor of Bowling Green, Kentucky.

The first train came through the town early in 1886 and a year later the railroad was completed south as far as Punta Gorda.

C. M. Keck, who now resides in Iowa, was the first freight agent and telegraph operator.

The first school in Bowling Green was a little frame building containing one room, and was on West Main street, about opposite where the baseball park now is. Louis Chastain was the first teacher.

The People's Hotel was the first establishment of its kind in the town.

It was opened when the town first started and was operated by R. H. Peeples. Soon afterward, the Bryant Hotel, operated by A. A. Bryant, was opened. Mr. Bryant also built the first blacksmith shop and operated this also.

Early settlers included the following: Travis Bryan, N. M. Bryan, J. T. Bryan, A. B. Bryan, A. M. Chester, Dudley Buck, I. A. Mason, W. R. Minor, Harry Stansfield, S. B. Hogan, A. Sauls, A. W. Vogler, H. M. Rudisill, G. H. Gill, C. A. Bryant, A. A. Bryant, R. H. Peeples, V. W. Surrency, Bascom Carlton, and others.

The first Methodist church built in the town was erected in 1889 just east of where the present church is located. Later it was removed to the present site. Rev. D. A. Cole was the first pastor and D. H. Barnett was presiding elder for the district.

The first Baptist church was built in 1909. The first preacher called was Rev. Charles Martin.

Both the Methodist and Baptist churches were added to about the year 1927 and both have large congregations.

There is also an Adventist church, which serves both Bowling Green and Wauchula.

The Bowling Green Masonic Lodge, No. 121, was established in the year 1904. Rev. Peter Brown was the first Worshipful Master.

The Eastern Star lodge, known as Ella Padgett chapter, was organized in 1908. Mrs. Emily F. Surrency was the first Worthy Matron and Rev. Armistead was Worthy Patron.

In the Bowling Green territory there was at one time four turpentine distilling camps, one each on the north, south, east and west sides. These

have long since been forgotten and now only traces of them remain, one being in the northern part of town, along the railroad right-of-way. A large sawmill is now the only manufacturing industry in the town.

There was a steady and substantial growth in the community, and in 1915 a new brick school building was erected. This is the present school building, which takes care of the educational needs of the town and community.

The town of Bowling Green was incorporated in 1905, and J. R. Vaughn was the first mayor.

About the same year, 1905, in the rear of T. R. Starke & Co. store, the first bank was organized. It was known as W. R. Minor & Co., bankers, and was a private institution.

On April 22, 1908, the bank was organized as the State Bank of Bowling Green. G. H. Gill was president and W. R. Minor cashier. These officers continued to guide the destinies of the institution for twenty years, until their deaths in 1928. The bank was closed for about a month during the summer of 1929, due to a financial crisis in the state, but reopened on August 20, 1929. J. H. Durrance is president; W. A. Hendry vice-president; T. H. Jones, cashier, and Miss Marcia H. Minor, assistant cashier. The bank serves the entire town and community and has many depositors scattered throughout the county.

Between the years 1910 and 1920, Bowling Green was widely known as a watermelon shipping center, sending out several hundred carloads of melons each spring. This industry has declined somewhat during the last few years, but in the spring of 1929 sixty-four cars of this commodity were shipped.

However, the decline in watermelon growing was followed by a remarkable increase in strawberry production, the town now being widely known as a strawberry center. The soil and climate seem admirably adapted to this industry, and Bowling Green strawberries have enabled Hardee county to win numerous first prizes at the South Florida Fair for the last several years. Last spring the town sent out 151 carloads of strawberries, in addition to many carloads of cucumbers, cabbage, beans, tomatoes, turnips, citrus fruits and mixed vegetables.

Cattle-raising was at one time an important industry, but this has died out now.

The first paving in the town was of brick and was laid at a cost of approximately \$8,000. It consisted of four blocks.

In 1926 about two miles of paving were put in at a cost of about \$200,000, which included the sum spent for improvements. Several blocks of white way lights were also installed.

The Hotel Green Terrace was erected as a municipal project in 1926 and is still owned and operated by the city. It cost more than \$50,000 and is quite an attraction to the town, being of charming style and well planned. It fronts on the Dixie Highway which runs through the town, and is frequently called upon to entertain traveling men and tourists.

There is also the Bowling Green Hotel, opposite the depot, which has operated for many years. It is a private institution. There is also a boarding house.

The town now has four dry goods stores, five grocery stores, two seed stores, two hardware stores, two drug stores, two barber shops, two

blacksmith shops, one shoe repair shop, two hotels, one boarding house, one sawmill, one grist mill, several garages, a motion picture theater, a telephone exchange, two physicians, a telegraph office, a large vegetable shipping shed, and other industries and facilities.

The population is estimated at about 1,200 and the town is well laid out, having wide streets and beautiful shade trees. These trees were planted by committees of women from the churches.

Bowling Green boasted of a newspaper before any other town in the county could claim one. Back in 1898 there was a paper at Bowling Green, called the Bowling Green Champion. It was published by Mrs. Neva C. Child, who ran it for a couple of years before moving to Arcadia.

After that time there was no newspaper in the town until 1925, when the Bowling Green Exponent was started by Stewart Hancock. In 1926 the Bowling Green News was started by the Shaeffer-Broking Company, of Sebring. H. Allen Smith was editor of this paper and it continued to be operated only about six months. Then it was purchased by E. S. Holman, who continues to publish the paper as the Bowling Green Exponent and News.

Bowling Green has a mayor-commissioner form of government. C. T. Ratliff is mayor and the following, with the mayor, are commissioners: W. H. Fortson, C. L. Taylor, W. J. Case, and William Cliett.

E. C. Keck is city manager and clerk, and E. E. Fussell is chief of police. The city offices are upstairs in the State Bank of Bowling Green building.

The Business Men's Club, sponsored by the Wauchula Lions Club and organized in the early summer of 1929, has a large membership among the local business men and meets every Wednesday at 12:15 at the Green Terrace Hotel. C. T. Ratliff is president and E. S. Holman secretary.

Bowling Green offers many advantages to the man who is looking for a place to live. The soil is fertile, the climate agreeable, and good roads, schools and churches are available. The people are progressive and prosperous, and the community, like others of the county, is sound.

HISTORY OF ZOLFO SPRINGS

The first settler in the Zolfo Springs section was David D. Mahan, who homesteaded where the present town is located about the year 1878. Mr. Mahan had a log house in which he and his family lived. Later, he sold some land to a Dr. Arnold, from Fort Meade.

The first store in the town was built about 1886, after the railroad came through, by J. P. Childs. He was also the first postmaster.

Along in the 1890s the Methodist church was organized there, in a little frame building where the present church is located. Rev. Sam Carson was one of the first preachers. He also conducted services at Scott's phosphate mine at that time. Later, a Baptist church was organized and these two churches serve the community today.

The town grew rapidly in the early days and between the years 1895 and 1900 considerable business was carried on there.

A school was established there in 1898, the election being held in July of that year. Prior to that time, there were schools at Popash, Lemon Grove, Scotts, Bowling Green, Wauchula and elsewhere in the county.

In 1913 the Zolfo Truth Publishing Company was organized and a paper started there. George W. Adams was

the first editor of this paper. Later, Stewart Hancock became editor and in 1921 the paper was moved to Wauchula and the name changed to the Hardee County Herald.

The town was without a paper then until about 1925, when the Zolfo Sun was started by E. M. Miller. It was short-lived and passed out of existence late that year.

A bank was organized at Zolfo Springs along about 1910 by Skipper & Skipper, Bankers. Later, it became the State Bank of Zolfo and occupied the brick building opened at a Fourth of July celebration about 1910 or 1911. In 1922 the bank moved to Wauchula and the name was changed to the Hardee County Trust Company. It continued to operate until in February, 1929, when it closed. The Citizens Bank of Zolfo was organized in 1922 and opened May 1st of that year. It operated until February, 1929.

A consolidated school is located at Zolfo Springs, and two fine brick buildings are there. One was built some years ago while the other was completed in 1926. They are ample to care for the needs of the town for several years to come.

The town was incorporated in 1911 and revised in 1913. The following are the officers: G. C. Bryan, mayor; B. H. G. Kistner, president of council; I.

S. Hall, D. Flowers, H. A. Licht, councilmen; Bergie Kight, clerk and tax collector; D. N. Hall, treasurer and tax assessor.

The town of Zolfo Springs contains two hotels, two packing houses, a telegraph office, two churches, two splendid brick school buildings, completely equipped, a seed store, two garages, two general stores, a community house, paved streets, electric lights, and other conveniences.

Zolfo Springs got its name from sulphur springs located there. The idea that this is an Indian name is erroneous, according to old settlers, who say it is simply a short way of saying and spelling sulphur. The springs, strongly sulphur, contain medicinal properties and a large flow of this pure, cold water flows into a swimming pool, which is the delight of hundreds every year. The springs are easily reached and are but a couple of hundred yards from the Dixie Highway. The place is used as a picnicking ground by groups from this and adjoining counties.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

There are two other incorporated towns in Hardee county, besides those already mentioned. They are Ona and Limestone.

The town of Ona, one of the oldest settlements in the county, was first located at the Reason Cowart corner on the road to the present town. John Parker and his two sons, William Hooker and Reason Cowart, were early settlers at Ona. There was a post-office there and mail was carried out from Wauchula.

When the C. H. and N. railroad was built through the western end of the

county, the town of Ona was moved to the present site, on the railroad. There is a post office, depot, several stores and garages, and a packing house at Ona.

Limestone grew up when the railroad was built in 1913. It was principally a lumber manufacturing town. The Germain Lumber Company operated a large mill there for several years. The town is incorporated, as is Ona.

Other towns along the C. H. and N. railroad include Fort Green, originally started by Jim Green, who built a fort to keep out the Indians; Fort Green Springs, which came into being when the railroad came through; Vandolah, built principally by the Wauchula Development Company as a settlement of Russians and Polacks.

The town of Gardner was first known as Calvina and was across Charlie Apopka creek. T. E. Fielder bought considerable land where the town now is and it was chiefly through his efforts that Gardner was established. He is really the pioneer of the town.

The town of Buchanan was named after John Buchanan, roadmaster of the A. C. L. It was a turpentine manufacturing settlement and the Norman-Huber company operated there.

Torrey was also started by John Buchanan, the roadmaster, for his father.

John Moffit started the town of Moffit after the railroad was built through the county. A large lumber mill was once located there.

Two of the oldest settlements in the county are Lily and Crewsville. John Platt was one of the first settlers of Lily and government maps of 1855 show families of Platts living in the

Lily section. Crewsville was started by Demps Crews and John Collier, who owned cattle in that section. They built a store there and before the A. C. L. railroad came through the county in 1886 Crewsville was quite a settlement.

Popash was another old community. A family of Thompsons lived there about 1855 and in 1859 a family of Smiths moved to that section. Dave J. W. Boney was one of the early settlers, going there about 1870. He had a store and grove there. The school there was started about 1898 and S. B. Hogan was one of the first teachers.

The Friendship community was another old settlement, started before the Confederate war. Calvin Hare was one of the first settlers, as was David J. W. Boney. Mr. Boney later sold out his holdings there, returned with Confederate money to Carolina, and when this money turned out to be worthless, returned and settled at Popash.

There was at one time quite a settlement at Sweetwater, when the Lock-

leys, Ed Wade, Eli Whidden, Frank Richards, and others settled there.

Thus we see that the settlements away from the railroad and highways, though they were started earlier than the others, amounted to little as towns because of their location. The towns like Wauchula, Bowling Green and Zolfo Springs grew up later but maintained a steady and substantial growth because of their central locations, on highways and railroads. Most of the old settlements, as will be noticed, were started by cattlemen and pioneers who came into the new country, cleared land and went to work. Gradually, they let their friends know of the opportunities and new settlers came in. It was by hard work and perseverance that the communities and the county came into being. It will take more of the same stuff to keep them going, but with the proper spirit of co-operation and by taking advantage of our opportunities we shall be able to see bigger and better communities and a better and more prosperous county.

THE END